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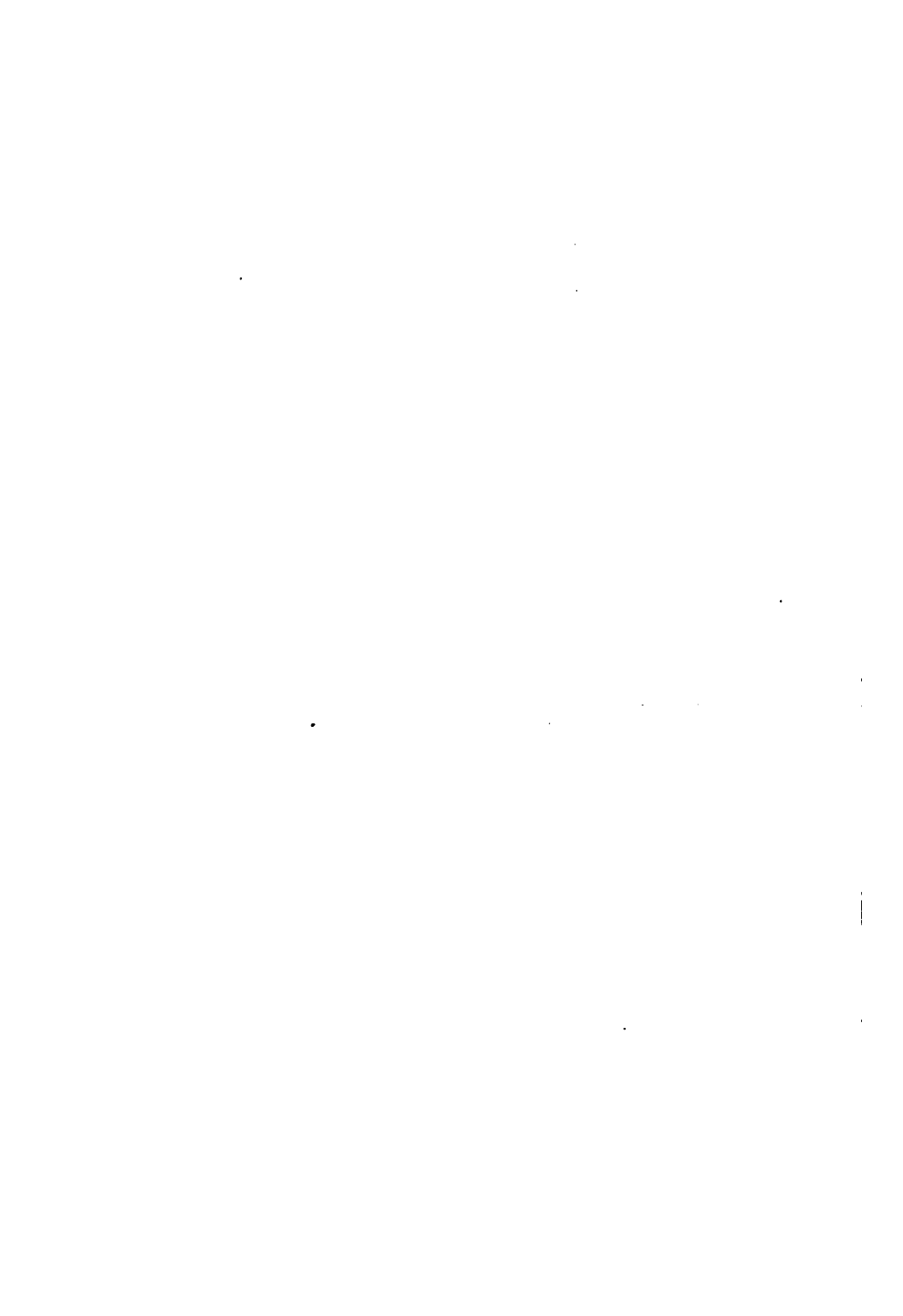
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Alfred Parsons

F. D. Millet

Frederic Engel

THE DANUBE
FROM THE BLACK FOREST
TO THE BLACK SEA

BY

F. D. MILLET

AUTHOR OF "A CAPILLARY CRIME" ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY

THE AUTHOR AND ALFRED PARSONS



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BOY VAN
FOR
VAN

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*“Wenn ich dann zu Nacht alleine
Dichtend in die Wellen schau’,
Steigt beim blanken Mondenscheine
Auf die schmucke Wasserfrau
Aus der Donau
Aus der schönen, blauen Donau.”*

—BECK.



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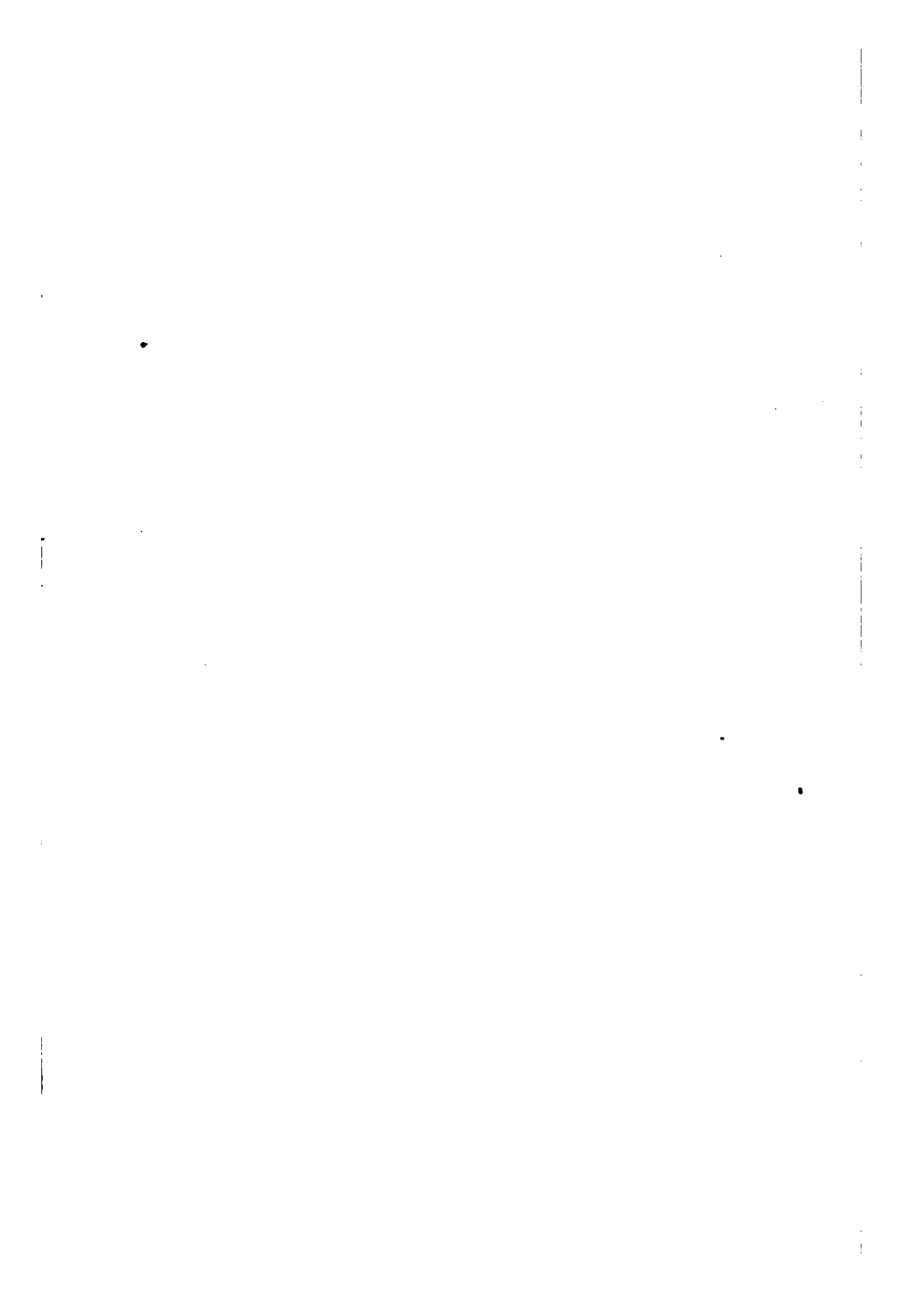
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THE DANUBE
FROM THE BLACK FOREST TO THE BLACK SEA



CHAPTER I

T the head of a pleasant little valley high up among the bristling mountain-tops of the Black Forest, a tiny stream of clear water comes tumbling down the rocks, and, gathering strength and volume from an occasional spring or a rivulet, cuts a deep channel into the rich soil of the hay-fields, and dances along gayly over its bed of glistening pebbles. To the north, west, and south the bold summits of the water-shed, heavily clothed in dark masses of coniferous trees, make a rugged, strongly accentuated sky line, and to the east delightful vistas of sunny slopes and fertile inter-vals stretch away in enchanting perspective to the hazy distance. This little stream, the Brigach, with its twin sister, the Brege, which rises about ten miles farther to the south, are the highest sources of the mighty River Danube, the great water highway of Europe since earliest history, celebrated for ages in legend and song, gathering on its banks in its course of nearly two thousand miles to the Black Sea the most varied and interesting nationalities in the civilized world, and unfolding in its flow the most remarkable succession of panoramas of natural beauty known to the geographer. The Black Forest Railway, which crosses the mountains from the valley of the Rhine into the upper valley of the Danube by the way of Triberg, mounts the western escarpment of the range by a series of steep grades, curves, and short tunnels, in the midst of beautiful scenery

of a semi-Alpine character, and, after the divide is reached, follows the course of the Brigach to Donaueschingen, a tidy little town in the Grand Duchy of Baden, usually called the source of the Danube, and, for the greater part of the year, the head of navigation for small boats on the upper river. A mile and a half below Donaueschingen the Brigach and

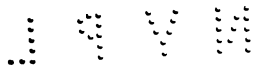


PEASANT GIRL OF THE BLACK FOREST

the Brege join, and the stream here receives the name of the Danube.

Our party of three was made up of ideal elements. The accuracy of this statement must be permitted for a moment, to eclipse the habitual modesty of that member of the expedition

whose duty it has become to tell the story of the trip. The originator of the enterprise was an expert canoist who had steered his frail craft through breakers of various seas and over shoals of countless rivers. On him was to devolve the literary part of the expedition—an arrangement which would have been carried out but for the ruthless interference of that all-powerful tyrant, Time. The other two members of the alliance expected to take elaborate notes of all attractive features of the landscape and all interesting types of humanity, the one meanwhile joyfully anticipating the pursuit of his favorite study of botany, and the other indulg-



ing in the exhilarating prospect of explorations in the fascinating field of philology, and looking forward with no little interest to revisiting under the pleasantest of auspices old friends and familiar scenes. We agreed to meet at Donauschingen on June 22d, and made all our arrangements to have the canoes reach that point on or previous to that date. The experience of old travellers with canoes was all against the successful consummation of this plan, particularly as two of the boats had to be shipped from New York, and would not be finished until the 3d of the month. The fate of the other canoe was more or less certain, for the owner decided to watch it himself all the way from London to the place of meeting, having learned after many disappointments that this process of transportation, although irksome, was the only one he could depend upon. On the evening of Saturday, June 20th, two of us left London in the wake of the Admiral of the fleet, who had paddled his canoe down the Thames to the Flushing boat some days before. Thirty-six hours later, on the morning of the 22d, refreshed and cheered by the brisk air of the mountains after two feverish nights on the journey, we saw between the showers of rain the brilliant sunlight sparkling on a tiny mountain brook near the little hamlet of Sommerau, on the eastern slope of the watershed. Although we had no



A HAYMAKER

map or guide-book, we knew at once that our acquaintance with the Danube had begun. The long-dormant sporting corpuscles in our blood took on a sudden and stimulating activity, and we were in a nervous quiver to begin our long-dreamed-of cruise. The Rhine had failed to charm us with its majestic scenery; we had seen only the hideous scars that modern man has made on the fair face of nature there, with villas of carpenter's Gothic and summer hotels of repulsively mammoth proportions. Cologne, Mayence, Strasburg, which, under ordinary circumstances, would have been joys to us, had been on this journey aggravating impediments in the way of our progress, for all the trains had seemed to combine viciously to break connections at these points and to force us to delay our eager flight. The charms of architecture and art, although always potent, had been but a meagre consolation to us in our impatience to begin our intimate communion with Nature. Even the wonderful railway journey over the pass, while it had put us in a better mood and temporarily stirred our emotions, had not given us a tithe of the sensation that the sparkle of the rivulet caused as we caught sight of it after a great gray curtain of rain had been driven away by an all-powerful flood of sunlight.

The quaintest and strangest of costumes met our eyes as we leaned out of the window of our compartment when the train stopped at the station of St. Georgen, eager to see how the brook had widened there. The hurrying peasant women, in queer skull-caps with immense ribbon bows, stiff bodices, and short petticoats, seemed to be the supernumeraries in the prologue of an exciting drama now about to begin. The train rolled slowly on with that peculiar settling-down motion that denotes a descending grade, and we watched the yard-wide brook gradually expand its channel and assume the proportions of a goodly stream. In the fertile valley near Villingen, where the country opens out

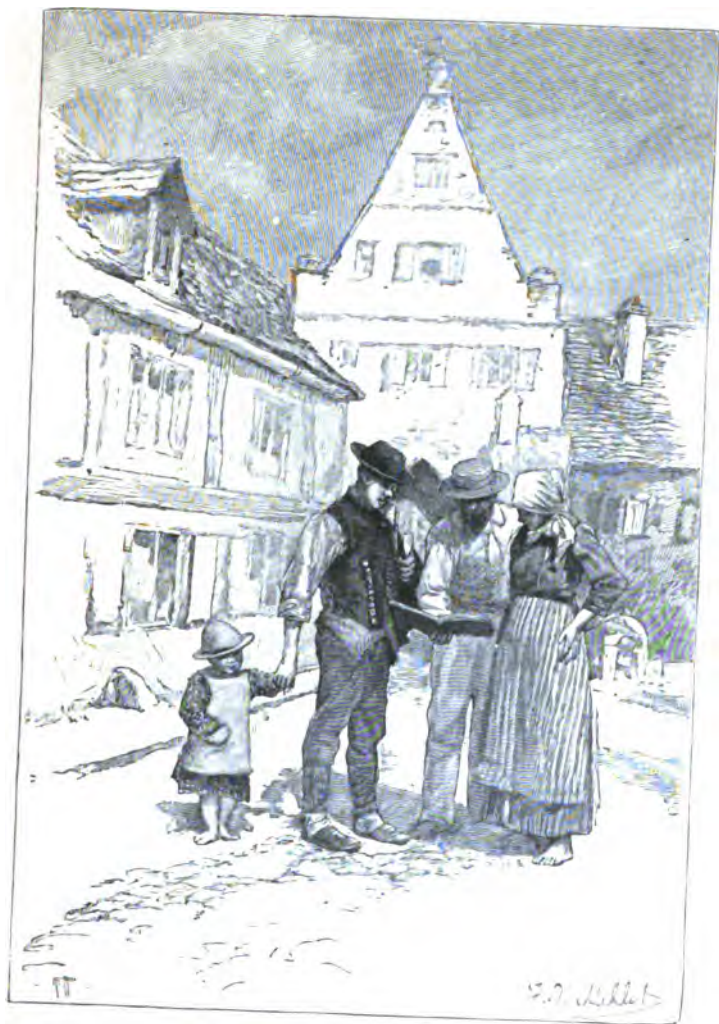


DONAUESCHINGEN GIRLS

and the landscape becomes more extensive, the stream was now fully a half-dozen yards wide, and the recent heavy rains had filled it nearly to overflowing with a yellow flood. We had a sudden and strong temptation to stop and begin our cruise at this point, but the uncertainty of the fate of our canoes, of which we had received no item of information since they had been shipped at New York, made it imperative for us to push on to Donaueschingen, and our ambition to make the highest start on record in the Danube annals was forever crushed by the considerations of transportation. Donaueschingen was still dripping from a heavy shower when we arrived about noon-time, but the eloquent beaming face of our companion would have dispelled the gloom of the heaviest thunder-storm, and we heeded not the weather, for we understood at once that the canoes had arrived and were all right. Indeed, contrary to all precedent and all prophecy, they had turned up safe and sound the day before; and when we saw them for the first time, all sleek and shiny and dainty, resting on the flag-stones of the inn-yard

as lightly as bubbles on a pool of water, we felt that kind and quality of elation that had been a stranger to us since the first happy day of school vacation. Graceful as violins, with sails whiter than the fresh whitewash of the tidy hostlery, with shining nickel fittings and every detail highly finished, they combined in their construction beauty and strength in a near approach to perfection.

Under the very wall of the inn-yard the Brigach, now quite a river and much swollen by the floods, rushed and foamed and filled the air with an inviting murmur. Donaueschingen has long been the starting-point for boating expeditions to Vienna, but, as we rightly conjectured, no craft similar to the American cruising canoe had ever before been seen there. Curiosity to examine the novelties, coupled with the knowledge of our plan to cruise as far as the Black Sea, which had been widely disseminated by our advance agent in his brief stay, made a ripple of excitement all over the town, and the inn-yard was constantly crowded with visitors, many of them skilled mechanics, for the neighborhood is widely famous for its clocks and wood-carvings. Only one of us, as I have already confessed, was acquainted with a canoe of this kind, but we were all experienced in the management of birch-barks and Canadians and other small craft. We effectually concealed our ignorance from the spectators, however, and in the guise of testing the apparatus after its long journey, worked the sails, rudder, and centre-board, set up the tents, shipped and unshipped the hatches, until we became quite familiar with the working of them all. It may be as well at the beginning to show the result of our examination of the canoes and to describe them briefly, for the reason that our adventures will be better appreciated and our river life better understood if some adequate notion can be given of the craft that carried us by day and housed us for the night for three happy months.



THE SKETCH-BOOK

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The three canoes were as nearly alike in dimensions, lines, weight, and fittings as the skill of an old and famous builder on the banks of the East River, New York, could make them. They measured 15 feet in length, 30 inches in width, and about 18 inches in extreme depth. A deck of thin mahogany covered the whole with the exception of an oval opening about 6 feet long and 20 inches wide, which was surrounded by an oak coaming about 2 inches high. A series of hatches was fitted to this coaming, and these could be adjusted in various ways, so that the canoe could be converted in a moment from an open boat into a modified *Rob Roy*, or entirely covered up and locked as securely as a jewel-box. Like all similar craft, a good strong oaken keel made the backbone, and a great many small ribs of riven heart-of-oak were copper-riveted to this keel, forming, with the stem—and stern-post and a few cross-timbers, a light, strong, and not too rigid skeleton. The sheer-strake was of mahogany, and the others of selected white cedar. All the fastenings were of the best copper, and the trimmings and fittings of nickel-plated brass. One peculiarity of the construction was that the deck-boards and all the strakes ran from stem to stern without a splice. The weight of each canoe, empty, was about eighty pounds, but with the nickel-plated drop rudder, heavy brass folding centre-board, two sails with masts and spars, paddles and general outfit, the whole weight in cruising trim must have been fully 200 pounds, but we never verified this estimate, judging only by the fact that at no time during the trip were they too heavy to be lifted easily by two of us.

We were naturally quite as much interested in the practical working of the canoes as in their appearance, for we knew that the brilliant varnish would soon grow dim, the smooth surface of the mahogany become dented and scratched, and that the lines and proportions would alone

remain to testify to the original perfection of the build. The two sails, a large leg-of-mutton main-sail and a mizzen of similar shape but much smaller, could be raised, lowered, reefed, and furled from the canoist's seat on the floor of the cockpit. The mizzen-mast could be unshipped, the rudder raised out of the water or lowered below the keel; the centre-board, which shut up like a fan into a long slot in the



BLACK FOREST COW TEAM

keel, could be adjusted to any desirable depth; the hatches could be shipped and unshipped, the canoe baled out, and all other necessary operations of navigation performed with the greatest ease and rapidity. A double-blade paddle 8 feet long, and jointed so that the blades could be turned at right angles to each other, was to be depended upon for the ordinary means of propulsion, but we anticipated using the sails as often as wind, weather, and the run of the river would permit. When paddling or sailing, the after-hatch of the cockpit was to be left on, and a movable bulkhead, upon which the forward part of the hatch rested, was intended to serve as a back-rest for the occupant, who also might sit upon the hatch and thus change his position at discretion. The length between the bulkheads was 8 feet, and on the cedar floor-boards of this space we proposed to make our bed for the night, triggng the canoe up on the

shore for the purpose, and thus providing for ourselves a dry, sheltered, and comfortable bed under all circumstances. A box-tent of good duck was made to be slung between the masts and to button securely along the gunwales. This was provided with flaps for ventilation and entrance, and with mosquito-proof curtains. The water-tight compartments fore and aft made excellent spaces for dry storage, and during the day all articles for handy use were to be kept behind the back-rest where they could be easily got at. The spare paddle, unjointed for the sake of packing, the sketching apparatus, maps and note-books, and the foot-steering gear and the fore-hatches, were to be the only encumbrances of the cockpit proper. When we came to experiment with our outfit we found that we had plenty of room and to spare, and subsequent experience proved to us the accuracy of our first plans for the stowage and arrangement of all our traps.

We naturally depended largely on the advice of the veteran cruiser of the party for the selection of our outfit, and we two novices had a consultation with him shortly after our expedition was decided upon. Knowing nothing about the canoes, we asked him what we should take along to make a bed with ; whether we should carry an air-pillow or one of the small cork mattresses we had seen advertised for such trips.

“ Dear me, no !” he said. “ You don’t need any blanket. Sleep in your clothes !”

“ But a pillow ?” we urged.

“ Just fold up your trousers for a pillow !”

“ Then what do you cover yourself up with ?”

“ That’s simple enough. Pop your legs in the sleeves of your coat and your feet and ankles will be as warm as toast.”

“ What about your shoulders ?”

“Oh, well; haul any old thing over your shoulders. You’ll soon get used to that. The less you carry the better.”

This unique method of making one’s self comfortable for the night appealed more to our sense of humor than it did to the practical side of our nature, and we decided to carry a good thick woollen blanket, a rubber one of extra quality, a canvas boat-bag with a suit of shore-going clothes, a sleeping-suit, various spare flannels, socks, boating-shoes, and other small articles. This bag would make, if packed with that end in view, an excellent pillow; and we proposed to trust to our constitutional endurance to become indifferent to the hardness of the canoe floor. A bicycle cape, a sketching umbrella and camp-stool, together with a sketch-bag full of materials, practically completed the personal outfit of the majority of the party. Of all these articles we found the rubber ones alone to be of no real use. The bicycle cape shed water for a few minutes and then converted itself into a complicated system of gargoyles which conducted the drip into the most intimate recesses of our clothing, and soon made the canoe floor a perfect swamp. As for the expensive rubber blankets, they were a fetich for many weeks. The hours and hours we waited for those dew-dripping sheets to dry! The care we took of them lest they should get burned or torn, and prove worthless in the hour of need! The trouble we took to pack them by day and to cover them up at night lest they should gather all the moisture of the neighborhood and communicate it to our clothing! We never but once used them to shed the rain, and that was the third night of our expedition, but we conscientiously lugged them along with us the whole distance, and got only our bother for our pains. The sketching umbrellas and the camp-stools were, on the other hand, of the greatest use and a constant comfort.

When it rained we sat at our ease on the stools and comfortably cooked and ate and smoked under the spreading expanse of white linen. When a shower overtook us on the water we often hoisted the umbrellas and drifted along as sheltered and as dry as could be.

Our *batterie de cuisine* consisted of three spirit-lamps of different sizes and styles, a few plates and cups of white enamelled ironware, a tin kettle, coffee-pot, teapot, and water-can, knives, forks, spoons, and ladle. These necessary articles, together with the hatchet, a few tools and copper nails, medicines and general stores, we soon learned to distribute properly among the three canoes, and thus divide the weight and amicably share the trouble of transportation. It was astonishing how much the canoes would hold, and every time we unpacked them we always marvelled at their loading capacity. In addition to the outfit described we often had to carry fresh meat, vegetables, milk and wine, and a large store of burning spirits, to say nothing of a great



SPECTATORS

many canned provisions. The limit seemed to be fixed only by the weight we were individually willing to struggle with.

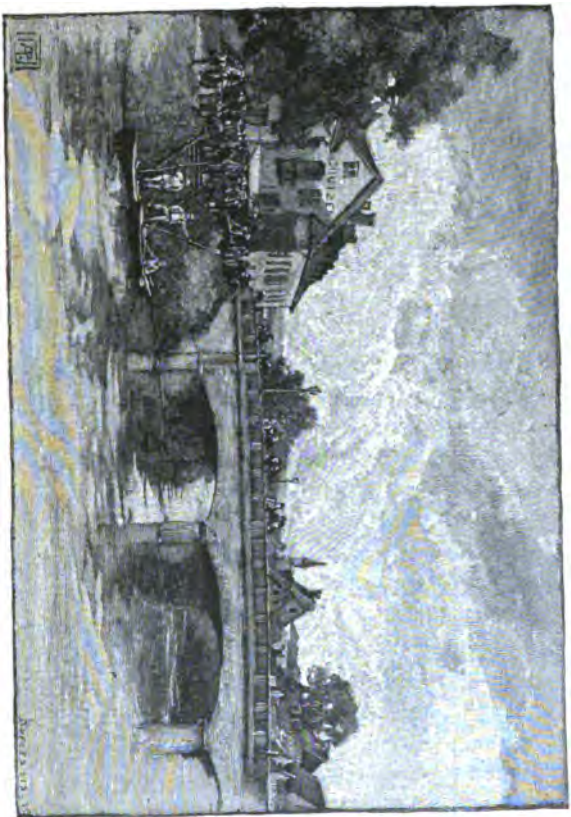
Our experiments with the canoes in the inn-yard and the rearrangement of our luggage occupied us most of the whole afternoon of the long summer day, but we had daylight enough left in which to see the town and stroll through the extensive park with its lakes and its sociable swans, and to gaze from afar on the inhospitable looking palace of the Princes of Fürstenberg, who have arbitrarily declared for their own glorification that a large spring in their pleasure-grounds is the actual source of the Danube. They have surrounded the spring with expensive masonry, and erected a stone tablet with an inscription giving the information, among other things, that that spot is 678 metres above sea level and 2840 kilometres from the Black Sea by way of the Danube. The hotel where we stayed is at the southern end of the fine stone bridge connecting the two sections into which the Brigach divides the town. Conveniently near to the hotel is a large flight of stone steps leading down to the water, and here we proposed to launch the canoes early the next morning and make our start, a few yards above the source of the Danube, according to the prince's tablet, and about 2000 yards above the junction of the Brigach and the Brege, where the stream is first christened the Danube.

CHAPTER II

THE final preparations for our cruise occupied more time than we anticipated, and it was quite eight o'clock before the canoes touched water at the foot of the slippery stone steps. A large proportion of the inhabitants of Donaueschingen gathered on the bridge and near the landing to see us off, and a dozen eager volunteers helped us carry our boats and launch them into the yellow stream. A few minutes sufficed to stow the traps, for we had sent the sails and tents and various other articles by rail to Ulm, thinking they would be more trouble than use on the upper part of the river, with its succession of dams and weirs. Then, amid the "Hochs!" and "Glückliche Reises!" of the multitude, we scrambled in, each in turn, and pushed off. We firmly believe that no one in the great crowd of spectators detected that two of us were handling a double-bladed paddle for the first time—not even the two ladies from Massachusetts whom we met at the inn, for their hearty interest in our trip, and their enthusiastic admiration for the canoes, doubtless blinded them to the observance of our awkwardness. The swelling, curling stream bore us merrily out of sight of the town, and only an occasional paddle stroke was necessary to keep the bow in the right direction. Boys and girls ran along the shady path trying to keep pace with us, and we saw on the highway a carriage with our lady friends, who loyally kept sight of us for several miles. A very short

time sufficed to familiarize us with the management of the canoes, so we could thoroughly enjoy the beauty of the landscape and indulge in the unalloyed feeling of satisfaction at our successful start, and we swept on through the great alternating patches of sunlight and shadow, under trailing boughs of large trees and past beds of tall rushes. In a few moments the Brege came in with a volume of water about equal to the Brigach, and then the real Danube rushed on, already quite majestic in aspect, through fields kaleidoscopic with myriads of flowers, reflecting in its pools the clear blue of the sky with brilliant summer clouds, adding new charms to the landscape at every turn. A number of swans from the park at Donaueschingen swam just ahead of us nearly to the first village, Pforen, with its dominating church edifice and huge wooden bridge. When they reached this self-imposed limit of their excursion they rose into the air with great flutterings and splashings, wheeled around and passed us so near at hand that we could feel the air from their great wings, then sailed away in graceful flight to their home in the secluded islands of the park. Large white wing-feathers danced along down stream; and when, many weeks afterwards, we dismantled our canoes on the shores of the Black Sea, we found one of these carefully stowed away in an angle of the underpart of the deck, and, with mock ceremony of a message from the Swan of the Source to the Sturgeon of the Sea, threw it to the strong north wind.

The meadows were full of haymakers—men, women, and children—laughing and chattering and bidding us “Grüss Gott!” as we passed. The odors of the fresh hay and the perfumes of the flowers were almost intoxicating in their strength. Nature on every side of us had that peculiar freshness and depth of color which comes with the first clear weather at the end of a long-continued rain, and the land-



THE STAKT—DONAUESCHINGEN

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scape, seen from the level of the water, had the increased beauty of line and composition which so often comes from this point of view in the perspective. In less than an hour we reached our first weir near the little village of Neidingen, but the banks were easily accessible owing to the height of the stream, and in five minutes we had dragged the canoes across a grassy point and had launched them again. From the accounts we had read of these obstructions to navigation of the upper river, we anticipated much greater difficulties than we encountered at any of the one-and-twenty weirs and dams we navigated between Donaueschingen and Ulm, although the first one of all was by far the easiest to pass, and should not be mentioned as a fair sample. The weirs are far more numerous than the dams; indeed, there are but two or three of the latter. These, of course, must be carried over because of the sheer descent of the construction, whereas the weirs usually consist of a long slope of masonry over which the canoes can be shot without difficulty at the end of a long painter.

The delight of our first luncheon in the open air will never lose its freshness in the memory of either of ⁽²⁾ us three. After a struggle with a weir at Geisingen, we landed in a pleasant meadow just below the village among waist-high ranks of wonderfully brilliant flowers, and lay for an hour basking in the balmy, perfume-laden, sunny air. At our feet the Danube, not the "beautiful blue" of song, but a vigorous, rushing stream, danced and sparkled in the sunlight. Before us were heavily-wooded hills with cool and tempting shadows, behind us the cluster of half-timbered houses and dignified church-tower of the village, and everywhere around the glories of a perfect June day. A few children, attracted by the sight of the canoes, interrupted our siesta; but when the school-bell sounded they all scampered away, and their prompt obedience to the call of authority made our inde-

pendence seem all the more real and desirable. Then and there at our first landing-place we formed ourselves into a Society for the Preservation of the Banks of the Danube, appointed a president, secretary, and treasurer, and a board of management, and unanimously adopted one regulation, which was to the effect that we should not disfigure in any way the spots we might occupy as camps, but that all rubbish and unsightly débris should be carefully hidden or thrown into the stream. To the honor of the S. P. B. D. let it be chronicled here that the regulation was strictly observed to the very end of the cruise.

Below Neidingen and past Geisingen, Immendingen, and Möhringen the river winds through broad, fertile meadows, and in summer it is a panorama of wild-flowers. In the quiet pools of the stream we startled many water-fowl, and once

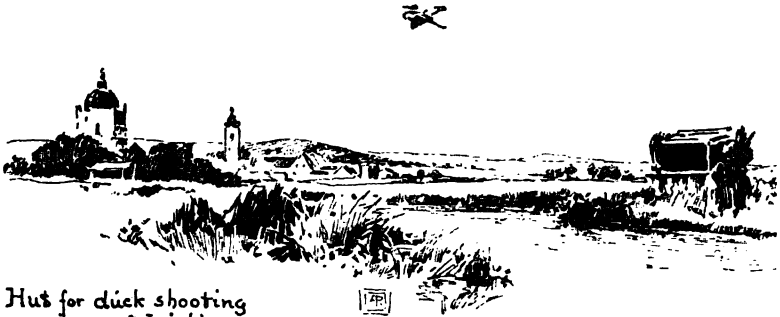


PFOREN

caught sight of a deer feeding near the water. Numerous huts along the bank showed us that this was a favorite shooting-ground in the season, and there were many indications that the game is carefully preserved. The whole of that perfect first day was one uninterrupted succession of surprises and delights, both in landscape and architecture. The frequent villages were all of them interesting and picturesque both in construction and in situation, and as the houses lost their alpine character and became more solid and settled in type, they formed fascinating groups, and made a charming feature of every view.

In the late afternoon we floated out of the sweet air of the meadows into a stratum of effluvia from the tanneries of Tuttlingen, and but for the fact that the town claims as its hero Max Schneckenburg, the author of the words of "Die Wacht am Rhein," who was educated here in his youth, and for the more cogent reason of hunger, we probably should have paddled past the town without pausing longer than to admire some of its architectural features. Tuttlingen is not all tanneries, although, as we approached, we thought it must be, by the smell. It is a goodly-sized place, with the usual castle, an unusual church, and red-tiled houses, many of them elaborately half-timbered. Opposite the town, which straggles along the right bank of the stream, a great open meadow is in process of reclamation from the floods, and is being converted into a park or public pleasure-ground. In this flat expanse of rough ground stands a great square mass of masonry, which will sometime or other support the statue of Schneckenburg, for the Tuttlingers are actively engaged in gathering subscriptions for this monument.

Schneckenburg can scarcely be called a poet, for these verses are probably the only ones of any account he ever wrote—at least, no others have been preserved—



Hut for duck shooting
Neidingen.

and they came from his pen at the age of twenty-one. Nine years later, in 1849, he died, having become established as a small merchant, after several years' experience as a commercial traveller. From the accounts given of him by his widow, the distinctive feature of his character was patriotic fervor, which found its earliest expression in his choice of a motto, "Deutsch," in his school-boy days, and later in the sentiments of "Die Wacht am Rhein." The ever-active discussion in our camp, whether the extraordinary popularity of the patriotic song is due to the verses or to the music, is hereby passed on for final settlement to the readers of this narrative. We never could agree about it.

As it was already late, when we reached Tuttlingen, we proposed to hurry our dinner so as to have plenty of daylight to shoot the great weir which filled the air with its roaring. But the deliberate ways of German landlords are not easily changed, and we only succeeded in getting off in the late twilight. With some misgivings we paddled out into mid-stream, towards the sound of the falling water, between the two great bridges. The fame of our expedition

had spread far and wide, and it was the hour of leisure, so the Tuttlingers had assembled by thousands along the banks and on the bridges to see the mad strangers come to grief in the cataract on the great weir. The sight of the black masses of people stimulated us almost to rashness, and, without mutual consultation, we steered straight for some snags which had caught on the angle of the weir, and jumping out into the knee-deep water, each of us shot his canoe over at the end of the painter fastened to the stern and, holding the line, scrambled down the incline where the water was shallowest, jumped into his canoe and swept away under the second bridge. All this was done in very

little longer time than it takes to tell about it. When the three canoes appeared almost simultaneously in the smooth water below the second bridge, shouts of "Hip! Hip!" and "Glückliche Reise!" echoed from the hillsides to the towers of Honberg Castle. We replied in chorus "Schneckenburger soll hoch leben!" and dramatically disappeared in the gathering darkness. A half-dozen youths, ambi-

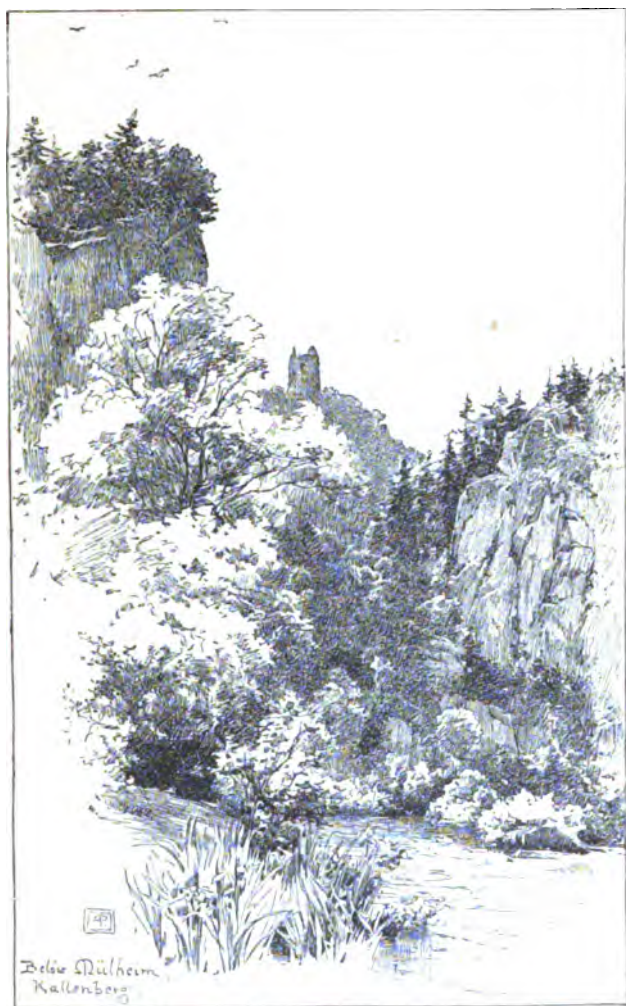
tious to discover where and how we were going to pass the night, followed us along the bank, and we were loath to make




MAX SCHNECKENBURGER, AUTHOR OF "DIE WACHT AM RHEIN"

[From an old portrait]

our first camp until we had gotten rid of them. We accordingly paddled on and on, scarcely able to see the banks, and at last found an apparently secluded spot and landed. We hauled up the canoes into the dew-drenched meadow, made our simple preparations for the night, and lay down in the snug, warm cockpits. The first night in camp is never a very restful one, and the unaccustomed and somewhat cramped berth with all sorts of sharp projecting corners and the hardest of floors, did not assist our slumbers. Nor did the visit of a bevy of peasant girls who had ventured out from a neighboring farm-house, which we had not noticed in the darkness, help us to lose consciousness as they stood for a long time in the moonlight chattering in soft voices and repeating the story of our exploit at the great weir, which had evidently been related to them by the youths whom we had successfully dodged when we landed. The heavy dew obliged us to cover up our berths in some way, and we tried the rubber blanket as the proper article for such a purpose. This was far too hot. Then we tried the deck hatches, which shut down so closely that they left no room for us to turn over and, besides, were as hot as the rubber blanket. So we passed the night between fitful naps and impatient struggles with temporary roofs. The sun had not begun to dissipate the river fog before we had taken our plunge and were ready for breakfast. By general understanding, the experienced cruiser, or Admiral of the fleet, was expected to do the cooking, and he had made elaborate preparations for this duty. The other two hungry members of the expedition watched the operation of preparing this first breakfast with eager interest, listening meanwhile to the words of wisdom which came from the *chef* as he sat in his canoe wedged into the narrow cockpit by all the paraphernalia of his temporary trade.



Belie Mühlheim
Kallenberg

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covering with its extensive buildings a great flat point in the river, under sheer towering limestone cliffs, surmounted by a grim black cross several hundred feet above the chapel spire.



Wildenstein

The monastery is imposing in extent but not in style, and the railway bridge close by does not add to the charm of the landscape. The rapid current hurried us on, not against our will, and we only paused to watch the monks haymaking in the meadows, wearing a dress which looked like a compromise between the costumes of a washerwoman and a Cape Cod fisherman. They must have suffered in the hot sun, with their gowns of heavy woollen stuff, but they suffered in silence, and did not deign to answer our greetings or even to turn their eyes upon us.

We practically finished the day's cruise at the little village of Gutenstein, where we dined in the simple country gasthaus for a ridiculously trifling sum, and listened to the droning gossip of a lounging locksmith, who was minding his little child while the mother was at work in the hayfields. With the exception of this descendant of the Jan Steen type and the landlord and his wife, we saw only small children and decrepit old people. The rest were all at work

haymaking, and we left before the population returned to the village. We selected our camp-ground—with an eye to beauty of situation as well as comfort—on a high point in a perfect paradise of wild-flowers. From Alfred Parsons's note-book for the first two days of the cruise I take the following extract, which will give an idea of the wealth of the flora of this district :

“From Donaueschingen downward the meadow flowers have a subalpine character—masses of ragged-robin and bladder-lychnis (the calyx of which is a delicate mauve), knotweed, various campanulas (one with bright mauve flowers in a very loose panicle), buttercups, purple sage, and grasses in flower. On the river banks for a long way down are masses of yellow iris, and occasionally sweet-calamus. In one meadow a purple variety of rocket; and generally the usual English meadow flowers. Lower down *Campanula*




THE MONKS OF BRURON

glomerata grows in fine purple masses with the sage ; and in the rocky parts about Beuron were bright pinks, like the cheddar-pink, *Geranium sanguineum*, and saxifrages. A bright blue veronica grows plentifully as you go down (*Quære spicata* ?). Other plants on the rocks were a purple lactuca, dog-rose, systopteris, wall-rue, and *Adiantum nigrum*."

As long as daylight lasted we botanized and sketched ; and when twilight came on we watched the glowing hill-sides fade into a simple mass in silhouette against the starlit sky, and then slept like tired children.

CHAPTER III

UR camp was pitched very near the boundary line between Baden and Hohenzollern, and a short distance above Sigmaringen, the residential town of Prince Hohenzollern. We were prepared to meet a certain degree of stateliness in the tiny capital, and our anticipations were strengthened by the sight of a well-kept park on the river-bank long before the town came in view. There were summer-houses and pleasure-boats and other indications that the place belonged to somebody of importance in the neighborhood. Further, the natural scenery was marred by the conversion of a large overhanging limestone cliff into a mortuary slab in memory of a princess who died in 1841, and whose virtues were set forth in metal letters a foot long. We expected, then, to find the town distinguished by equal pretensions and bad taste, knowing too well how much destruction can be wrought in these modern times by the engines at command of every long purse. To our surprise and delight, however, the panorama which spread out before us as we approached Sigmaringen was one of great beauty, and the town, imposingly situated on a high promontory, made an unusually fine focus in the composition. We found on near acquaintance that the architecture, though not unpleasing, was by no means particularly interesting, and we did not delay there longer than was necessary to purchase a few stores.

About forty miles by rail and road to the north of Sigmaringen is the great castle of Hohenzollern, the seat of the imperial family of Prussia. The present castle is of modern construction, having been begun by Frederick William IV. and finally completed in 1867. It is remarkably bold in situation and commanding in appearance, and, although it has seldom sheltered any of the imperial family of late years, is kept up with great care and is garrisoned by quite a large force of troops.

Sigmaringen marks the lower limit of the series of rocky gorges into which the river plunges near Friedigen, and soon after leaving the town we came into a more pastoral region again, similar to that of our first day's cruise. The flora changed somewhat, and fewer varieties of plants were notice-



able. Alfred Parsons makes the following remarks in his botanical note-book: "Below Sigmaringen the meadow flora becomes more like that of England, but still with campanulas and purple sage; also occasionally a bright crimson di-



anthus with clusters of flowers. In an ash wood beneath which we camped was an undergrowth of *Spiraea aruncus*, all in bloom, five or six feet in height; in the wood also were Turk's-cap lilies, Jacob's-ladder, tall, pale-yellow phyteuma, and commonly, near the river, gelder-rose bushes and clumps of forget-me-nots and white water-buttercups. The general impression of the flora is a greater prevalence of purple and blue flowers."

Frequent villages dot the hill-sides on either side of the broad, fertile valley, and the river begins to feel a new tyranny of man in the partial canalization of its channel. The current now increased in speed between the artificially straightened banks, and, counting the kilometre marks as we swept along, we found we were making seven and a half kilometres (nearly five miles) an hour without lifting a paddle. A more satisfactory mode of progression never fell to the lot of any traveller. Perfect summer weather, a comfortable canoe to lounge in, beautiful landscapes on all sides,

and a vigorous current under the keel which gave an exhilarating sense of added strength, much like that felt when riding a spirited horse. Nothing more could be desired except, perhaps, unlimited time in which to enjoy such pleasant recreation. Haste was, indeed, a slight drawback to our enjoyment. We did not dare delay, for the season was already in its full prime, and we knew that the gales began in the lower river as early as the first week of September; besides, one of the party had only a limited number of weeks

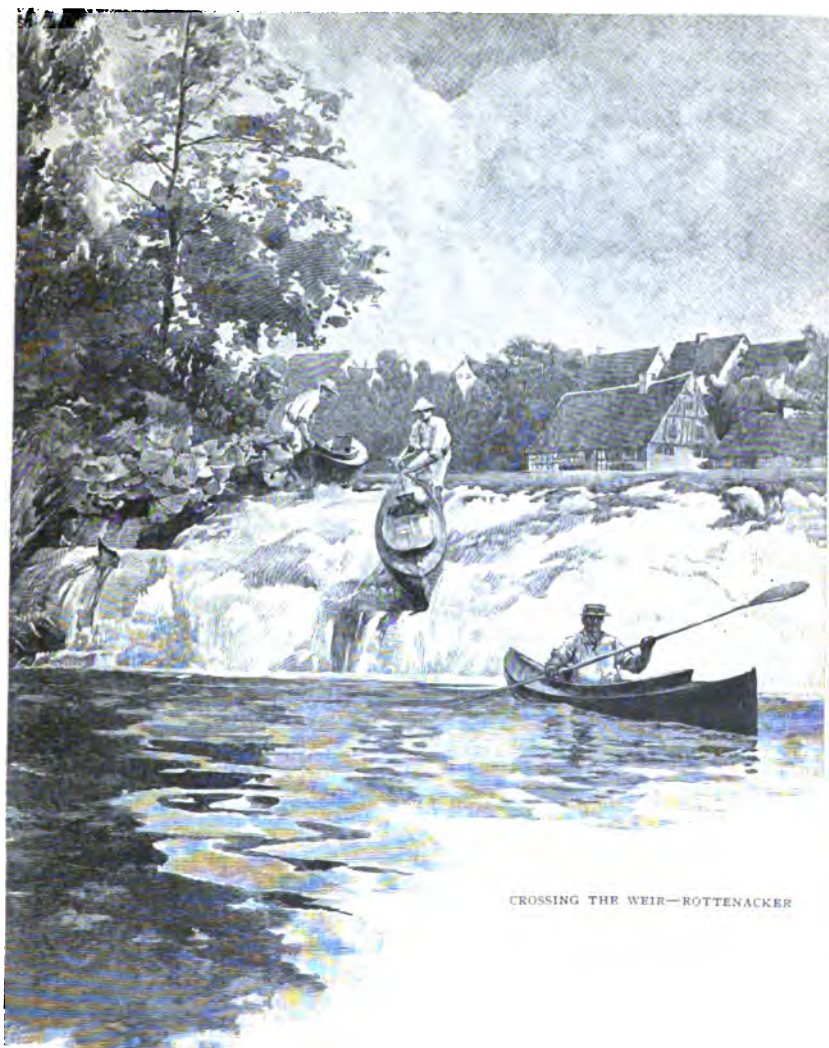


NUNS AT RIEDLINGEN

at his disposal. Under other circumstances we would have spent a day or more at Riedlingen, where we found most interesting architecture along the river-front and saw a party of nuns at work in a hay-field. We had a little more social success with them than we did with their co-religionists, the monks at Beuron, for they turned their great, cool, flapping head-dresses in our direction, and actually seemed temporarily interested in our canoes, and in us as well.

A threatening storm drove us to seek shelter at dinner-time in a rural gasthaus in a little priest-ridden hamlet where a morose landlady gave us excellent bread and milk in rude earthen bowls, and was prevailed upon to part with some of her store of fresh bread and eggs. The peasants came hurrying into the village to escape the rain, their creaking carts piled high with hay and the sturdy little horses white with sweat. It was a ready-made picture from "Hermann and Dorothea." We had occasion to regret in the night that we had not brought our tents, for it rained steadily for hours, and the rubber blankets rigged on the paddles made an inefficient shelter against the driving storm. But we were none the worse the next morning, and as soon as the ring of scythes of the women mowing in the next field woke us from our sound sleep we were up, cooked breakfast, and were soon off down pleasant reaches with overhanging rocks and occasional ruins frowning down from the pinnacled crags.

Every mile or two we passed a village, each more picturesque than its neighbor, and all with sonorous names that suggest places of great importance—Rechtenstein, Obermarschthal, Munderkingen, Rottenacker. Each village had its weir and its mill, and sometimes two of them. Various accidents occurred, none of them of a startling nature, and none resulting in anything worse than temporary incon-



CROSSING THE WEIR—RÖTTENACKER

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PEASANT GIRLS MOWING

venience. The Admiral of the fleet, trusting too much in his knowledge of river navigation, swamped his canoe in a weir, and would have been in a sad strait but for the timely assistance of some mill hands. The canoes got some heavy bumping at times while we were shooting rapids below the weirs ; but there was little or no injury done to them, and the only actual loss of property was one favorite brierwood pipe—a loss which will appeal to the sympathy of every smoker who has tried the pipes of central Europe. We happened to reach Rottenacker at noon, when a great procession of rustics, armed with every imaginable kind of hay-making implements, was crossing the bridge to their labors after the mid-day meal. They halted on the bridge, looking for all the world like a detachment from Monmouth's army, and watched us run the canoes over the weir. They gave a hoarse shout of approval of our skill, and after we had dashed down under the great wooden bridge they marched

off in almost martial array, and scattered over the broad meadows like skirmishers. An hour later we reached the last weir on the river at the village of Oepfingen, and, confident from the appearance of the water that the canoes would float on it with our weight, we triumphantly paddled over the crest and shot safely into the boiling pool below. We had counted in all only twenty-one weirs and dams, although the different accounts of expeditions in the upper river give the number as twenty-five between Donaueschingen and Ulm. In all probability the unusually high water covered some of the smaller ones, and we consequently failed to make a record of them.

Below the last weir the river is monotonous and the country not particularly interesting. Turnip-topped church-spires rise above the red-tiled roofs of villages clustered on the hill-sides, and but for these features of the landscape the river might be the Thames or the Avon. Soon, however, several vigorous streams add their waters to the main current, its speed and strength rapidly increases, and its course is regulated into a straight and canal-like channel. Not realizing the speed of our progress as we floated along, we



BRIDGE AT ROTTENACKER

came in sight of the village of Erbach on the hills to the left of the river much earlier in the afternoon than we expected, and at the same moment saw, far beyond in the blue distance, as faintly outlined as a delicate cloud-form, the great tower of the Cathedral of Ulm breaking the low horizon line. We at once took to our paddles and increased our pace, urged on by the sight of our goal for the night and the beginning of our cruise in the navigable river. In full sight of the city, some two miles away, we passed the Iller, rushing in with a broad, pale-green flood and a strange hissing noise like the escape of gas from soda-water, and then the Danube, reinforced in strength and in volume, tore along with almost angry speed, and showed great swirls where the pale waters of the Iller wrestled with the opaque yellow of the larger stream. We saw by the white waters at the buttresses of the railway bridge as we dashed past that we had to deal with a current far more powerful than any we had yet navigated, and accordingly approached the left shore with some caution, as there was a high wall along the water's edge and only an occasional practicable landing-place. With all our efforts to stop our head-way we found ourselves obliged to turn the bow up-stream and paddle hard to keep from being swept past the town. In this way we came alongside the float of the Donau Ruder Verein (Danube Rowing Club), and landed, welcomed by a delegation from the committee of the club, who had heard of our intended visit. They gave us a hand to carry the canoes up to the boat-house and made room for them on the padded trestles.

The club boat-house is a fair-sized building, well enough constructed for the purpose, and conveniently fitted up with quarters for the crews and stowage room for the boats, which number nearly a score, several of them from famous makers in England, but mostly of German build. Notwithstanding

the disadvantages of rowing in so rapid a current, and the difficulties of launching and landing the boats, the members practise with great enthusiasm, and the club has a remarkably good record in the boating annals of Germany. The committee placed all the resources of the institution at our command, and not only gave us every assistance in repairing the slight damages which our canoes had suffered in the rough treatment they had received at the weirs, but made other generous offers of hospitality. The president, who is a mechanical genius of considerable fame as well as an enthusiastic sportsman and a traveller, was devoted to our interests, and made every moment of our stay agreeable. Before we departed our ex-cook presented the club with his famous coffee machine as a slight acknowledgment of their kindness to us. We have never learned how much the ranks of the Donau Ruder Verein have been decimated by the use of this dangerous invention.

Ulm, whether it be approached by land or by water, has the uninteresting external appearance of any modern military stronghold, for it is surrounded by great fortifications, and an elaborately constructed citadel occupies the whole of a flat point opposite the town on the right bank of the river. The old town itself, once the military barrier is passed, is a marvel of architecture and a maze of narrow, crooked thoroughfares, many of them scarcely worthy to be dignified by the name of streets. The wonderful cathedral, next in size to that at Cologne, with the loftiest stone tower in the world, is not to be adequately described within the limits of this narrative, nor was it, indeed, thoroughly examined by us on this hasty visit. The town offered so much to occupy our attention and command our admiration that we could only pause to study briefly each superb monument of ancient art and hurry on to the next. The restless river with its rushing current had communicated its nervous haste

to our spirits, and within twenty-four hours we had seen the town, repaired and repacked our canoes, adjusted the appliances intended for use in the large river below, and were waiting only for the farewell festivities in the boat club to come to an end in order to launch our canoes to the "Hip! hip!" of our sporting friends.

The president of the rowing club, with an enthusiastic young friend, accompanied us in our start from Ulm, in one tiny, home-made canoe which floated scarcely an inch above the water. Their scorn of the dangers of the curling flood filled us with admiration, but we could not affect the indifference which is born only of long familiarity with the

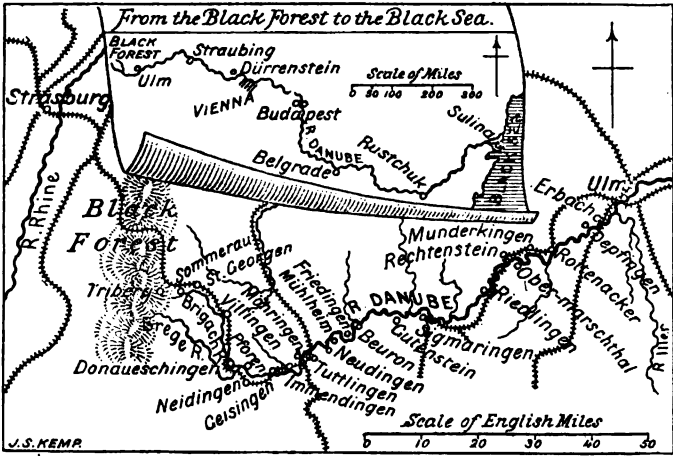


WOOD-SAWYER AT ULM

Danube, and proceeded with our usual care. Great yellow billows surged against the stone piers of the old bridge as we shot with dizzy speed through the shadow of the arch out into the broad stream below. It began to rain, but we paddled all the harder in order to reach the village of Günzburg as early as possible, so that we might have time to dine and afterwards make camp before dark. The rain did not in anywise diminish our ardor for sleeping in the canoes, for we had passed a feverish night in a stuffy hotel bedroom and longed for the air and freedom of our camp.

The stork's nest on the highest gable of the interesting old town was scarcely visible in the twilight when we paddled away after a jovial dinner with our friends, who were to ship themselves and their canoe back to Ulm by train. As we

pushed out into the stream the distances were so exaggerated by the dim light that the Danube now looked like a broad lake or an arm of the sea, and the strongly eddying current twisted our paddles with a vicious persistence that warned us to be circumspect in choosing a landing-place in



FROM STRASBURG TO ULM

the uncertain light. Luck more than judgment directed us to a pretty little secluded meadow where, for the first time, we made camp in regular order, tents and all.

The question of choosing camp was, as we now fully understood, a more or less difficult one, for, as the three canoes were seldom very near together on the river, it would be practically impossible to fix on a desirable place by common agreement at the time of camping. We therefore appointed the most experienced camper a committee of one to choose the camp in the future, and agreed to abide by his decision. A special instinct, or at least an accurate and ready judgment, must be the absolute qualification of the one who chooses halting-places along a river like the Danube, for the current,

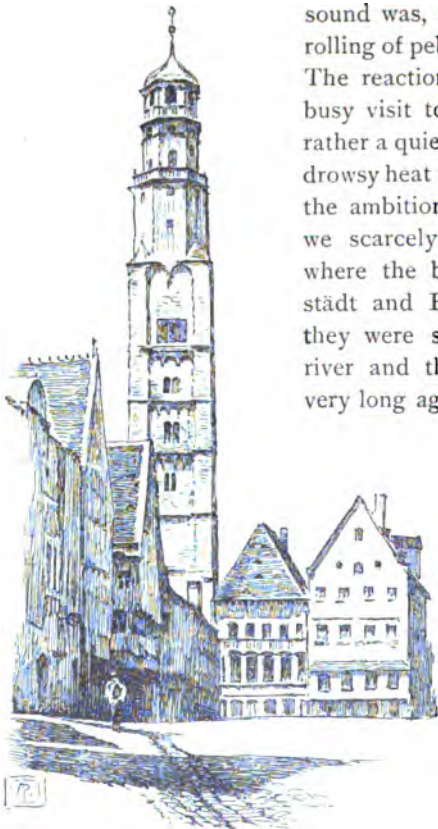
running as it does from three to six miles an hour, makes it impossible to make the selection at leisure. Before there is time to weigh the reasons for and against the spot the stream has carried the canoe past the landing-place, and return is practically out of the question. We demanded of our camp grounds more and at the same time less than the ordinary cruiser. First, they must be in as agreeable a landscape as possible, for as we spent several hours of daylight there we wanted to sketch and to enjoy the scenery. Then they must be so situated that the canoes could be drawn up readily and prepared for the night without carrying the traps too far. On the other hand, sand, turf, or smooth surface of the ground, though desirable, was, fortunately, not an absolute necessity, as they would have been if we had not slept in our canoes. Further, as we used spirits for cooking, we did not have to consider the question of wood, and the absence of fire made our camps very little objectionable to the farmers. Indeed, we were made welcome to temporary occupation in every instance but one, and on that occasion the farmer evidently thought we intended to remain all summer long, for he began to talk about the second crop of grass. A largess of German coin of the value of ten cents made him waive all objections and give us the freedom of his meadow.

CHAPTER IV

IT was on Saturday, June 27th, at about five o'clock in the afternoon that we left Ulm, and the following day about noon we reached Lauingen, having spent most of the forenoon in camp rigging our sails, properly adjusting the tents, and doing a hundred other odd jobs which the ownership of every boat entails. The Admiral, who had preceded the rest of the fleet by an hour or more, was in the centre of an interested group of natives when we hauled alongside at the landing, and all Lauingen in its Sunday best was lounging near by, happy in the entertainment which the arrival of the strange craft offered. The old town walls are half hidden by excrescences of modern construction which cling to them for their whole extent, sheltering a notable proportion of the inhabitants. With this exception the place is not materially changed since the sixteenth century, and still has to a very remarkable degree the character of an old Dutch town both in details of construction and in the general character of the domestic architecture. Most of the large buildings are warehouses and residences combined, and there are few front doors which are not provided with a little side window or squint set in at an angle so that the street can be seen without opening the door. All distinctive costume has been modernized out of the place. The people look cheerful, active, and prosperous to a degree unusual in such a remote town, and we were fain to believe that this

vitality was due to the leaven of those of the inhabitants who had been to America, not a few of whom greeted us with an exaggerated Hoboken dialect. But the modern spirit has not obliterated all the queer old customs, and Sunday was busy with parades of turnvereins and sporting clubs with all the pageantry common to the ancient guilds. In the midst of the festivities a stately carriage drove into the market-place where the statue of Albertus Magnus, the famous scholar of the thirteenth century, was erected ten years ago in the shadow of the great tower with its sixteen stories. It was a wonderful old vehicle, with broad leathern springs and great hood, a huge rack behind piled high with luggage, a seat in front occupied by a servant—a buxom country girl—and with a long pole like a single shaft, to which one horse was attached in a sort of casual fashion by a harness of the most antiquated and peculiar pattern. Under the hood sat a young man who held the lines and guided the horse across the square towards the inn, while the servant-girl, with folded arms, occasionally nodded and smiled at friends in the multitude. We fancied this must be some local dignitary, such was the grandeur and stateliness of the turnout, but we found on inquiry that it was only a conveyance from a neighboring town bringing a commercial traveller with his packs. Truly, even this much-derided occupation has its agreeable features in Bavaria.

It was an exceedingly hot day, and the river for the next dozen miles or so was not very interesting, as its channel had been confined between dike-like banks through a great steaming marsh. Every two hundred metres of the distance is marked by a numbered post, and from our low position these were often the most prominent objects in view. The hissing of the water, which began at the confluence of the Iller, was always plainly heard, but the water was so muddy that we could not discover whether or not the cause of the



*The Bell tower
Lauingen.*

sound was, as it is said to be, the rolling of pebbles on the river-bed. The reaction from our brief but busy visit to Lauingen put us in rather a quiet frame of mind. The drowsy heat was not stimulating to the ambition for sight-seeing, and we scarcely looked at the hills where the battle-fields of Höchstädt and Blenheim are located, they were so far away from the river and the events seemed so very long ago. We had more interest, moreover, in

the near foreground with its occasional clusters of brilliant bloom. Alfred Parsons says of this region: "For a long way above and below Ulm the banks are lined with small willows and coarse grasses; occasional bunches of forget-me-not and some iris and valerian are the

only flowers. On a hill-side near Donauwörth I saw bright pink dog-roses, campanulas, geranium, veronica, epipactis, Turk's-cap lilies, pink coronilla, which is abundant, and a tall white composite with groups of daisy-like flowers and a leaf like the tansy; also a white erigeron."

The glorious, lazy afternoon was well on the wane when

we came to Donauwörth, a blaze of richly-colored roofs and lichen-stained walls and with an enchanting skyline of gables and towers. We left it with reluctance before we had seen half of its beauties. The restlessness of the Danube had begun to eat into our souls and, without our knowing it, had created in us a new appetite — a craving for constant motion.

Not far below Donauwörth the Lech contributes its pale-green waters, flowing northerly from the water-shed of the distant Alps beyond Lake Constance, and it brought down to us for our entertainment several rafts with cheery river folk, and we began the next day in their company. They ran ashore at the upper end of the town of Neuburg, where the Danube is crossed by a large stone bridge, and we stopped there as well. Finding, however, that we were uncomfortably far from the centre of the town, we soon pad-



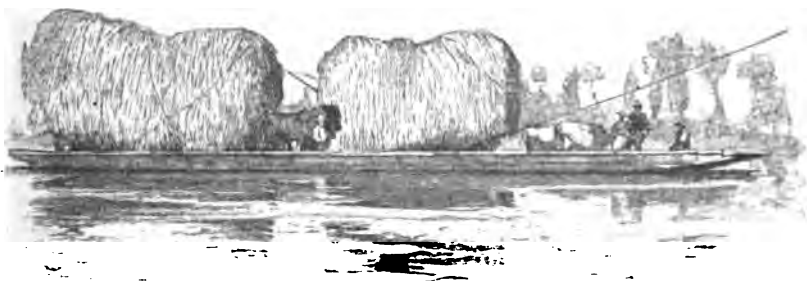
Donauwörth.

dled off again, shot the seething rapids under the bridge and, hurried along by the current, landed after some difficulty and serious bumping against the perpendicular stone

wall, at a broad flight of stone steps opposite a cheerful-looking hotel with a formal row of standard roses all along in front, tied to neatly-painted sticks surmounted by gilded balls. We had already gone ashore when our attention was called to our canoes by the excited shouts of the crowd hanging over the stone parapet. To our horror we saw one of the long rafts swinging down under the bridge with irresistible momentum directly upon our canoes, and the raftsmen making frantic gestures at us. We understood that in order to check the raft they were obliged to beach her in the shallow water near the steps, and, indeed, she was headed for that point, and no human power could stop her. For a moment it seemed as if our canoes must be ground to splinters, but we rushed down and promptly dragged them a few yards up-stream, utilizing the noisome mouth of a sewer for a harbor for one, and lifting the others bodily out upon a narrow ledge of broken rock. Then, dashing into the water, we put all our strength against the raft and she ground along within a foot of our precious boats, and we were saved from our friends.

It took an unusual quantity of beer to cool us off after this exertion, and our afternoon cruise was not further remarkable except for the sight of various immense ferry-boats swinging across the stream attached to wire guys and bearing two great loads of hay, cattle and all, and for a visit to Ingolstadt, a military post of great importance and correspondingly unattractive aspect. We camped that night on the beautiful point of a low meadow where our shadows fell in long lines towards the neighboring town of Vohburg, almost too picturesque to be real, and were promptly and unwillingly introduced to our first Danube mosquitoes, who kept us diverted if not very much amused during dinner, and until we had crawled into our curtained berths and let them buzz and pipe in futile rage against the impenetrable gauze.

Vohburg is said to be the most virtuous town in Bavaria, the reward of virtue there being a dowry of 50 guldens (\$25) to each maiden of unblemished reputation when she takes the marriage vows. One of the notable results of this bounty is the encouragement of intermarriage, for the youths are of frugal dispositions, and fifty guldens are fifty guldens here quite as much as anywhere. Our first visitors the next morning were the storks of the town who solemnly sought the early worm and the casual frog, and they took flight at the approach of a troop of the ugliest children to be found where the German language is heard—and that is saying a great deal. They stood a long time in a circle around our camp, either too much astonished or too stupid to reply to our volley of questions. We couldn't help thinking, as we looked at



F. D. Millet

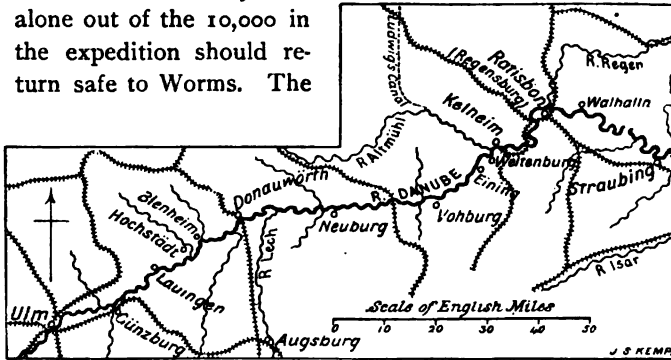
THE FERRY

their unintelligent faces, that it would be much better for the race if the dowry fund should be embezzled by the town-clerk and vice rule triumphant for a while. Our curiosity was not satisfied by this slight glimpse of the inhabitants of Vohburg, and besides, the ancient town gates, the massive ruins of the burgh—which was destroyed, like everything else about here, by the Swiss in 1641—and the old church-tower, stuck full of great stone cannon-balls, tempted us to land. Possibly the

impression gained from a brief visit was not a just one, but although we found the architecture interesting and the people friendly and courteous, we could distinguish nothing of the charm which our imaginations had pictured to us as the result of generations of prosperity, peace, and domestic virtue.

The Danube is never really monotonous, for, apart from the ever-changing landscape, the life on the bank offers endless interest to the observer. We had drifted for a couple of days through a broad, flat country, and never had experienced a dull moment. Although we were not impatient for a change of scenery, we began to look forward with pleasant anticipations, soon after leaving Vohburg, to the chain of hills that formed the horizon to the east and north, promising narrow gorges and rapid water. Except for our increasing eagerness for progress as the hills began to take definite shape in detail towards the middle of the forenoon, we should have undoubtedly landed at Eining, a little cluster of houses on the right bank, near which are the remains of the great Roman frontier station Abusina, which, from its topographical situation, and also from its geographical position near the most northerly point of the river's course, was chosen as the chief outpost of the Danube provinces against the German barbarians. This station was maintained with two or three interruptions from its establishment in 15 B.C. until the end of the fifth century. Across the river are distinctly visible the outlines of Trajan's wall, which extended from this point to Wiesbaden on the Rhine. We were much interested by what we could see of these remains, for we knew that to be but the first in the long series of similar monuments along the Danube to the Roman occupation, which never fail to excite the wonder of the traveller at the enterprise and persistent courage of the great Roman general. Near at hand, too, is Verger of the "Niebelungenlied," where King Gunther and his Niebelungen crossed

the Danube on their way to Budapest and the court of King Attila. It was at this spot that Hagen tried to drown the priest of the expedition because the water witches had predicted that the holy man alone out of the 10,000 in the expedition should return safe to Worms. The



FROM ULM TO STRAUBING

facts of history and the fascinating figments of tradition seemed to draw for us across this smiling valley a frontier clearly defined in our imaginations, beyond which limit we were to enter upon a new phase of our journey.

The Benedictine abbey of Weltenburg, with its crenelated walls and extensive façades, placed in exactly the right spot on the river-bank, like the composition of the theatrical drop-curtain, stands at the head of a narrow, rocky gorge, about four miles in length, more grand and impressive than any on the river above. Weltenburg is an easy excursion from Kelheim, and divides the attraction of the neighborhood with the Befreiungshalle, or Hall of Liberation, near the latter place. Knowing this fact, we were not surprised to find in the midst of the mournful relics of past grandeur the liveliest kind of a beer-garden, with a half-acre of tables under shade trees in the court-yard, and regiments of stone mugs waiting to be filled at the convenient tap of

a great brewery in one of the monastery buildings. The clock struck twelve as we entered the enclosure. Every one rose and uncovered his head, and stood like the scattered supernumeraries on the operatic stage. The peal of the organ in the adjacent church added to the dramatic effect, and if the whole company had burst forth in a chorus we would have been little surprised at it. The gorgeousness of the church interior contrasts painfully with the poverty of the establishment, only too plainly indicated by the ill-



Between Weltenburg &
Kelheim.



AN EARLY VISITOR

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kept grounds and the general air of neglect on all sides. Excursionists frequently take the short trip through the gorge in small flat-boats rowed by women, and there is another monastery on the left bank, half-way down, so there need be no more than thirty minutes between jorums of beer, the important adjuncts of these trips. The river, narrowed to one-third of its width above, winds between perpendicular limestone cliffs so smooth that it has been necessary to attach iron rings to the rock at intervals near the water's edge for the use of boatmen, and the women rowers often tie up their boats to these rings to rest during the upward trip. The heavily-wooded hills overhanging the left bank at the lower end of the gorge are crowned by the Befreiungshalle, a huge, circular building in classical style, begun by Lewis I. of Bavaria in 1852, and inaugurated on October 18, 1863, the fiftieth anniversary of the battle of Leipsic. This monumental structure is of imposing dimensions, the dome rising nearly 200 feet above the great stone platform, reached by a noble flight of steps. On the exterior the different provinces of Germany are represented by eighteen colossal female figures, with corresponding trophies and candelabra, and the interior, which is lined with polished marble of various colors, is surrounded by white marble angels symbolical of victory, with tablets bearing the names of famous German generals, bronze shields made from captured French guns, and inscriptions celebrating various battles.

Landing at Kelheim we toiled up the steep hill in the hot sun, and then cooled ourselves in the twilight of the interior, skating in felt slippers over the mirror-like pavement, and listening to the remarkable echoes which magnified the slightest sound into thunder. We were way-laid on our descent from the hill by a garrulous ex-citizen of Brooklyn, whose fulsome praise of Americans and

everything American finally drove us out of the cool shelter of a river-side beer-garden and into the blistering cockpits of the canoes. We set forth with the vague intention of passing the night somewhere above and near Ratisbon. Even before we came in sight of the town we looked everywhere for a camp ground, but a high-road on either side left not an acre of ground at the water's edge where we could land without becoming the focus of observation from a dozen farm-houses. We therefore pushed on until sunset, and just as the beautiful twin towers of Ratisbon cathedral loomed up across a wide open valley to the east, we landed on a quiet meadow, carpeted with sweet grass, and there we slept until the peasants trudging to market along the bank in the early morning awoke us with their voices.

CHAPTER V



THE busiest part of Ratisbon is the twelfth-century stone bridge which, from daybreak until dark, resounds to the tramp of heavy-footed peasants, and to the clatter of farm wagons and other vehicles. A narrow street plunges from the end of the bridge under the archway of an old city gate into a maze of narrow thoroughfares with towering mediæval houses and a jumble of small shops of all kinds. One of the houses near the bridge has a startling decoration covering the whole of its front—a colossal figure of Goliath painted on the stucco—and there are preserved in some of the other streets the only specimens extant of the fortified dwelling-houses of the Middle Ages. The Cathedral of St. Peter, with its exquisite Gothic details, is one of the chief architectural glories of all Germany, and in its solemn interior are forgot for the time the Danube, its hurrying current, and the impatient canoes. The fact that we were not in the ordinary costume of travellers gave us immunity from the annoyances of guides, and this freedom added wonderfully to our enjoyment of Ratisbon. We sat on the clean pavement of the great market-place, in the shadow of church walls, and nearly made ourselves ill with quantities of wild strawberries from the baskets of the friendly market-girls close by, paying a ridiculously small sum for a quart of the luscious fruit. We wandered in and out of the churches, stood and gazed at our ease on the architectural

beauties of the town, and never were we once spoken to, or even, to our knowledge, once stared at with curiosity. Even our presence in the crowded tavern, where the crowds of market-people took their mid-day meal, did not excite any comment, and during the few hours we passed in Ratisbon we had the supreme satisfaction of passing unnoticed, which rarely comes to any one in a foreign country. It is said that 17 per cent. of the 35,000 inhabitants of the city are Protestants, but we concluded that we did not come in contact with any of the choice minority in religious belief, for we saw on all sides shrines and crosses and other indications of the strict adherence of the people to the observances of the Roman Catholic faith.

The old stone bridge has been saddled with a bad reputation among river-folk ever since some one started the legend, long ages ago, that the devil had a hand in its construction. It crosses the river at the upper end of a rocky island which divides the stream into two unequal parts, the one on the town side alone being navigable. Four narrow arches, springing from immense boat-shaped piers, confine the current into a very narrow compass, and cause the water to rush under the bridge with great velocity. We had listened to a long description by our boating friends at Ulm of the dangers of shooting this bridge, and all the river-side people we had talked with for the previous day or two had warned us of the perils of the passage. But we saw from the parapet what we had to encounter in the shape of rapids and whirlpools, and did not hesitate to trust ourselves and our canoes to the mercies of the current. The first of the series of bugbears which were in turn presented to us by the Danube river-folk, and by the accounts we had read, was disposed of in such an easy manner that the mention of it is scarcely warranted by its importance as an episode of our journey.



RATISBON FROM THE BRIDGE

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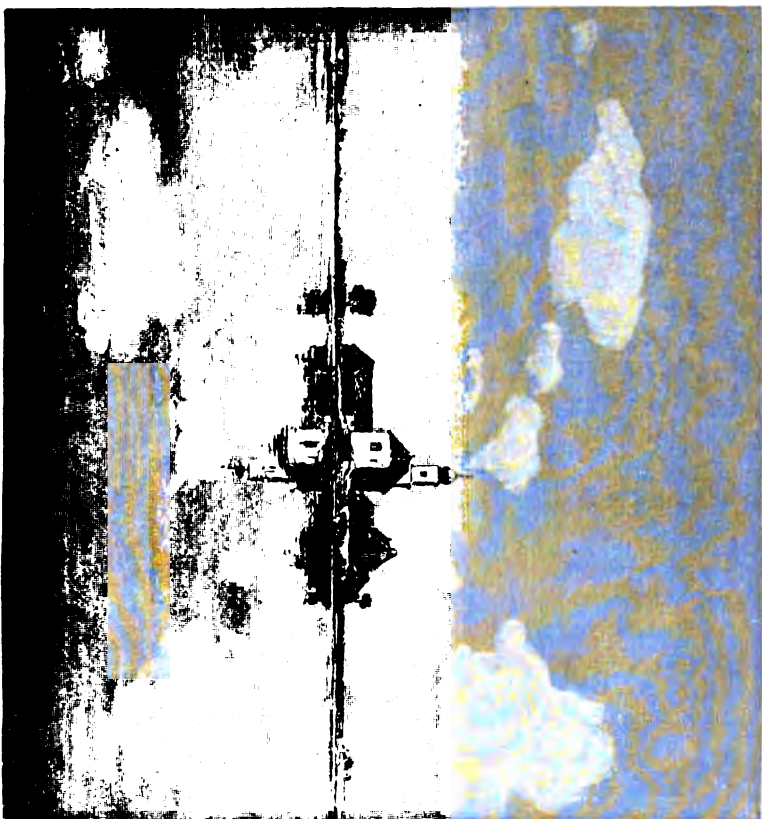
Opposite the lower part of the town the Danube receives the turbid waters of the Regen (hence the German name Regensburg) coming in from the north, and then the great river settles down into a gently-flowing, well-behaved water highway, at times lively with steam tow-boats, barges, and rafts. It skirts the hills on the left bank for five or six miles, and then lazily meanders away through the great plain of Straubing, the chief grain-growing district of Bavaria. The point where the river leaves the hills is the most northerly limit of its whole course, and here it changes its general north-easterly direction—which it has held with many minor variations since Donaueschingen—and bears away in a south-easterly course towards Vienna. This angle is not far from midway between these two places, which are 535 miles apart by the river channel. On one of the great rounded hills, fully 300 feet above the water's edge, the great German Temple of Fame, the Walhalla, makes a conspicuous landmark. Lewis I. of Bavaria, who, it will be remembered, was the founder of the Befreiungshalle, saw the completion of the Walhalla the very year he laid the corner-stone of its fellow monument, thirty miles away, in 1842. It is a classical structure built in imitation of the Parthenon, but of somewhat larger dimensions, and occupies a most commanding position. We saw by the guide-book that it contained Victories and Walkyries, busts of heroes, and friezes painted to celebrate the early history of the German race. After the perfect harmony of the Ratisbon cathedral we had no appetite for German classicality, and paddled past, content to gaze from afar upon the noble proportions of the temple.

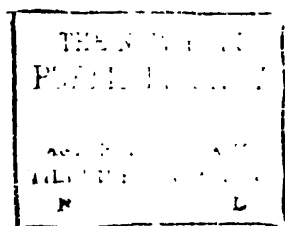
Although we had rain the night before, it was hotter than ever as the sun mounted high in the heavens, and before we had penetrated far into the heart of the great plain we found the air so dead and the heat so oppressive that we



RETURNING FROM MARKET, RATISBON

were obliged to paddle in self-defence, and by this means create a draught along the water. The glare of the sun was reflected into our eyes with painful brilliancy; a few dazzling clouds hung in the sky, apparently quite stationary. The pitiless force of the sun was never once hidden by a veil of vapor during the hours we paddled down the current, which scarcely rippled the surface of the water, as dense in appearance as molten lead. The town of Straubing, plainly enough visible when we left the hills, and





seemingly only a short distance away, avoided us for a long time with aggravating success. Now it would loom up in front of us, now on one side and again on the other, and often hid away behind us. At last, about noon, having quite lost our points of compass in the contortions of the river, we sneaked up to the will-of-the-wisp town, and, dodging around a point, came fairly upon it and landed there. We made it a rule in this part of the river, and, indeed, wherever towns and villages were frequent, to take our mid-day meal in some hotel or restaurant, for, unless we did so, we saw absolutely nothing of the shore life. By this time our standard for towns had become so high that we could not care much for Straubing, although the stay there refreshed us and interested us somewhat; but we were off down the sluggish stream, eager to reach the hills where we knew the current would be faster and the landscape more interesting. Near Bogen, a few miles below, at the hour in the afternoon when the heat of the sun seems more intense even than at full noon, the western sky was suddenly darkened, and a dense storm-cloud rapidly raised its jagged edge towards the zenith. Opinions varied as to the advisability of riding out the threatening squall, or going ashore to wait for it to pass. We paddled on for a considerable distance discussing this question, and finally decided to run ashore near a large farm-house resembling in character a large Alpine chalet. We landed not one moment too soon, for before we got our hatches fastened we heard the roar of the wind up-stream, and the next instant the squall tore down the river, lashing the water into a sheet of foam, and bending the trees like switches. Our loose rigging stood straight out in the blast, and the hastily-furled sails fluttered like clewed-up top-sails in an Atlantic gale. We had all we could do to keep the boats from being blown bodily along the rough beach. In a few minutes the violence of the gale

abated, and a heavy rain set in. We made our little fleet as snug as possible and as safe as we could by lashing the masts together, and ran to the farm-house near by, where the farmer and his family welcomed us with dignified courtesy, and offered us the freedom of the house with such hearty good-will that we could not help making ourselves at home. It was a characteristic establishment of the better class, and the main building was of some antiquity, as the date 1683 on the lintel of the front door testified. This immense structure was mostly of wood, and a great shingled roof covered not only a large living apartment, with many bedrooms, but the stables for the horses and cattle as well. Most of the farm-work was evidently done by girls, and the farmer told us he employed them because they were almost as useful as the men, and their wages were only fifty guldens (\$25) a year. A half-dozen of these girls, indifferent to the pouring rain, with short petticoats, tight bodices, and with kerchiefs on their heads, were carrying manure in hand-barrows when we arrived, and when they had finished this task, and had materially increased the huge pile that occupied the only front yard there was, they all had a vigorous scrub at the pump, and then came in and ate bread and milk with us, and chattered away as freely as if we were old friends. We were loath to leave this pleasant, pastoral company, but as the sky was bright again at sunset we felt obliged to be off. We did not succeed in persuading any one to take the money which we felt was due for the food we had eaten, so we dropped it in the poor-box near the forlorn little chapel, and paddled away to a camp on a dripping hill-side, where we found a delicious cold spring and a mossy bed for our canoes to rest on.

We had met at intervals since leaving Ratisbon great empty flat-boats towed up-river by horses, and an occa-

sional one laden with shingles or other building material had drifted down past our camp before we started in the morning. As high up as Ulm we had seen these boats in process of construction, and had learned all about the cheap flat-boats which in the spring-time carry cargoes to the lower river, and are then broken up for the sake of their timber. We had expected to see much more of this kind of river life than we actually met with, but the fact is the competition of the railways has practically killed this kind of river commerce, and its glories are all in the past. The local business still continues to flourish, however, for many of the river towns have no connection with the railway, and



LOCAL FREIGHT FLAT-BOAT

depend almost entirely on the water highway for cheap transportation of freight. The day after the storm we ran across several of the great local freight-boats floating down with the current. These boats are ordinarily about 20 yards in length, 5 or 6 in beam, and with a depth of from 4 to 6 feet from the great flat, keelless bottom to the rail. The bow is high, and the stern-post is often carved and otherwise decorated. They are built of soft wood, the seams are calked with moss, and since paint is seldom used except on the perpendicular black stripes, which is the almost universal

fashion for boats on the German and Austrian Danube, the life of the best of these craft is not often more than ten years. Each boat has a small, rude skiff for convenient use, and a supplementary scow large enough to carry considerable cargo, as well as afford open-air stabling for a pair of strong horses. On the down trip the horses lead a lazy life in their floating stall, but on the return they drag the empty boats up against the rapid current, trained to know every yard of the way, for the varying heights of the river and the conformation of the banks make a regular towpath out of the question, and the horses splash along through the shallows for miles at a stretch. The crew of these boats usually consists of an experienced skipper with two men and a boy. They all take turns at the steering-oar, and are constantly obliged to handle the immense sweeps to keep the cumbersome craft in the best channel. The work of baling water is no light one, and apparently goes on day and night with little intermission. They use for this purpose a great wooden scoop, or shovel, and throw the water out over the side from the floor of the rude little hut which shelters the bunks of the crew.

Two of us accepted a cheery invitation to go aboard one of these boats, and we spent the larger part of the forenoon lounging in the shade of the deck-house and indolently watching the ever-changing panorama on either side of the river. The skipper, a very fatherly old man, a shrewd observer, with a great knowledge of river life, was busy part of the time in tending a large tin kettle which was thrust, gypsy-like, into the side of a fire which was brightly burning on the tiles with which the boat was laden. As soon as we saw that the meal was almost ready to be served we made a move to leave, not wishing to interrupt this ceremony. But the old man detained us almost by force, and insisted on our eating before they began. He placed be-

tween us a large bowl of coarse, yellow-glazed pottery, gave us a wooden spoon apiece, and a thick wedge of black bread, which we broke, according to his commands, into the capacious vessel. When the soup was ready he poured it over the bread, filled the bowl to the brim, handed us each a bottle of beer, and bade us eat and drink until not a crumb or a drop remained. We were hungry, the soup was delicious, and the beer cool and refreshing, and we did not longer hesitate, but fell to at once. The only thing which interfered with our full enjoyment of the meal was the presence of a generous supply of beef in the soup, in chunks



ON THE TILE-BOAT

as large as our fists. Our maxillary muscles were not sufficiently well developed to enable us to masticate the phenomenally tough fibre of this meat, and we chose our opportunity when the broad back of the hospitable skipper was turned and slid it overboard. To our relief it went to the bottom like a sounding lead, and did not, as we feared, come bobbing up astern to bear witness to our insincerity. We gave our host a tiny American flag as a souvenir of our visit. He would take no money nor any of our stores, but was delighted with the Stars and Stripes, more especially as we had explained that the following day was Freiheit's Tag, or Independence Day, in the great Republic of the West. We left him diligently digging a hole with his knife in the high stem-piece of the boat to plant the flag there.

Rowing clubs are numerous all along the river from Ulm to Vienna. Soon after leaving the flat-boat we landed at one near Deggendorf, a quiet old town with miraculous relics in the church, which attract many thousands of pious pilgrims annually. Later on in the day, as we were rounding a great bend in a solitary part of the river where we least expected to see anything afloat, we suddenly met a single-scutt boat of the newest pattern shooting up the river like an arrow. A handsome athletic young fellow was pulling with all his might, evidently in training for a race. Our surprise was naturally mutual, for he no more expected to see a fleet of graceful, polished canoes than we did to see the Danube waters parted by the keen bow of a racing boat. He recovered from his astonishment first, and shouted heartily, "Hip! hip! Hip! hip!" We replied with the same salutation, for we had learned by this time that this call was not, as we had at first supposed, a playful imitation of the English cheer, but the common greeting in boating circles. We needed no further introduction, and could, indeed, have had no better one than our canoes, and we free-

ly accepted the hospitalities of the Winzer Ruder Verein, whose tidy boat-house stands on the river-bank a mile or more from the village. The club has a membership of thirty-six, all of them sturdy young fellows of the neighborhood, with an enthusiastic love of water sports. A certain count, the local magnate, is the patron of the club, and contributes largely towards the training of the oarsmen, who compete with success in the regattas all over Germany. The jolly young fellows made so much of us, and received us so heartily into their brotherhood, that we had not the courage to explain that we were not real boating men at all, but only temporary members of the guild. Indeed, it is doubtful if they would have believed our statement, for we were quite as sunburned as they were, and our five days' canoeing had put us in first-rate physical condition. But on this, as on several other similar occasions, we had a lingering feeling of mental discomfort, because we could not help knowing that we were passing for what we were not, and never expected to be—sporting men.

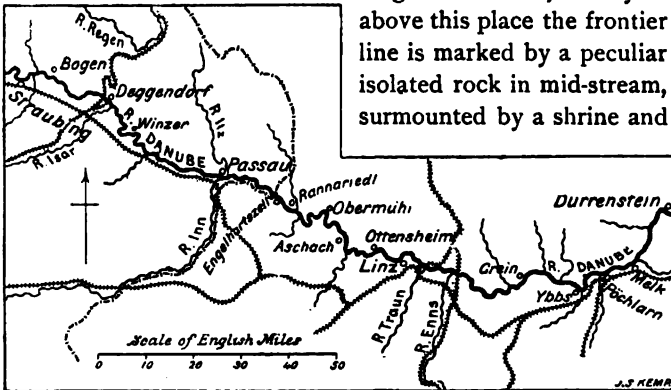
CHAPTER VI

THE poplars of Passau came in sight early on the morning of the Fourth of July, but we had no intention of celebrating the day, particularly as one-third of our party took only a languid interest in the event. Neither did we care to meet any more boating men, however agreeable they might be, for, besides the consciousness of our false position, we had a realizing sense of the value of our time, and almost begrudged the hours spent at these boating entertainments. We avoided the rowing club at Passau, and stole in behind a floating bath-house and hid our canoes away there. This move did not save us, however, for as we were crossing the bridge, two rowing men who had seen us come down-stream were on hand to waylay us, and before we could enter a protest we were whisked off to luncheon. The town is attractively situated on a high promontory at the junction of the Inn and the Danube, and is, indeed, as far as natural environments go, one of the most beautiful spots of the whole river. The town itself, or at least as much of it as we were allowed by our friends to examine, is full of interest, although not distinguished by any remarkable monuments of art. The unruly Inn, which is always ready to overflow at a moment's notice, comes rushing into the Danube with a dirty yellow, rubbish-strewn flood, and gives the larger river a sturdy shouldering for a long distance down-stream. It is the contamination of the Dan-

ube by the Inn that changes its color below Passau. Above this town it is in ordinary seasons of a greenish color, and sometimes, in the deep, shady pools, of an intense and beautiful blue; but the Danube as we saw it from Villingen, near the source, to Vilckoff at its mouth, was always of nearly the same monotonous, pale color of *café au lait*.

From Ratisbon down we had met occasional freight steamers and tow-boats, and at Passau saw our first passenger steamers—comfortable little craft, which make the popular trip from this place to Linz, fifty-six miles below, in about four hours. The right bank of the Danube below the mouth of the Inn belongs to Austria, and the left bank, for fifteen miles or so, to Bavaria. The Austrian customs-station on the river is at a little hamlet called

Engelhardszell, and just above this place the frontier line is marked by a peculiar isolated rock in mid-stream, surmounted by a shrine and



FROM STRAUBING TO DÜRRENSTEIN

crucifix and the rude figure of a saint. We were obliged to go ashore at Engelhardszell to pay river toll on our canoes, and, notwithstanding our strange appearance, each barefooted and sunburned, we met with the greatest civil-

ity and courtesy, and paid our sixteen kreutzers (eight cents) apiece without a murmur. Below the frontier the river narrows to half its width, and the speed of the current increases in proportion. The average fall per mile is also much greater in this part of the river than it is from Ulm to this point. From Ulm to Ratisbon the average fall per mile is 1.5 feet; from Ratisbon to Passau, 0.625; from Passau to Linz, 2.5, from Linz to Grein, 2.8, and from Grein to Vienna, 2.876. The flora has varied somewhat since the last reference was made to the botanist's notebook, and the information on the subject is sure to be interesting:

"Below Weltenburg there are pinks and other rock flowers . . . and at Kelheim, climbing to the Befreiungshalle, I found a herbaceous clematis with flowers like flammula, or erecta, and with glaucous leaves. The river-banks are mostly devoid of flowers, but on a shingly beach below Ratisbon, where we camped, I noticed a yellow sedum and a dwarf phlox, not in flower. Lower down, when getting near the hills, there were large patches of pink coronilla and a pale yellow mullen, also willow-herb and a white cruciferous plant.

"The high, woody hills below Passau are almost entirely covered with beech and pine, but round the houses near the river are walnuts, plums, cherry, and other trees. On the rocks grows a genista with slender twigs and a spike of yellow blossoms, and there are patches of evening-primroses in the more open places. Though vines, hops, and other tender crops grow well, the flora has quite a subalpine character, and the houses are often like Swiss chalets.

"In the woods behind our camp, opposite Rannriedl, I noticed pyrola, hepatica, lady-fern, and oak and beech fern, *Spiraea aruncus*, Solomon's-seal, lactuca, and a fine campanula. In a meadow where we camped the next day were



Greim, from the Camp. July 6, 1891

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herbaceous climatis and lychnis with drooping white flowers and a berry-like seed-pod, *Anthericum ramosum* and loosestrife.

“By our camp at the mouth of the Traun (July 6th), I noticed purple and yellow loosestrife, meadowsweet, meadow-rue, white convolvulus, and the same flowers generally that grow by English rivers. Sea-buckthorn grew among the willows. By wood opposite Grein saw cyclamen, pyrola, hepatica, and various ferns, and monk's-hood just below.”

A light rain, which began while we were in camp opposite the restored Castle of Rannriedl, continued during the whole day we were passing through the gorge, and, although we got a fair notion of the beauties of the scenery, we deplored the absence of sunshine more for esthetic reasons than for demands of personal comfort. We were cheered a good bit by a jolly luncheon at the little mountain village of Obermühl, and while the lowering clouds were still sweeping across the summits, and ragged patches of vapor were trailing along the mountain flanks, we paddled out of the gorge and past the town of Aschach, where we were diverted by the difficulty of dodging a curious ferry, which, as we floated down, seemed to blockade the river by an impassable line of great flat-boats chained closely together. The uppermost boat of the line we soon found to be moored in mid-stream a goodly distance above the town, while the lowermost one was attached a great double-decked ferry-boat which, by ready adjustment of the angle of its side to the current, was forced across the river by the rush of the water in exactly the same way that a vessel is propelled at right angles to the wind. The net-work of side streams and lagoons between Aschach and Ottensheim, just above Linz, a distance of ten miles or more, is simplified to the boatman by a line of fine stone dikes on either bank, which confine the current to a comparatively straight and narrow

channel, and we passed this tangle, which appeared on the map to be very difficult of navigation, almost without knowing it, certainly without recognizing any resemblance to our chart. A narrow chain of hills concealed Linz from our view until after Ottensheim was passed, and the sight of an ordinary four-wheeled cab, with the usual rawboned horse and red-faced driver, crawling along the level river-side road, was the first hint we received of the flourishing, modernized, and somewhat commonplace character of the prosperous city.

The rain still continued, and after a brief pause at Linz we paddled on in search of a camp. The shores were marshy and uninviting, and as the gray twilight deepened our prospects were far from encouraging. The light had almost gone from the sky before the camp finder turned the bow of his canoe across the stream in the direction of what appeared to be a backwater with a pleasant grassy bank in the shelter of a wood. With our eyes fixed on this goal we were paddling hard to stem the current which threatened to sweep us past the chosen spot, when we suddenly shot from the turbid flood of the main stream into the crystal-clear water of the Traun, at the mouth of which we had fortunately selected our camp-ground. We had become accustomed to the rain by this time, and as we were snug and dry when once inside our tents, we were more or less indifferent to the weather in camp. The next morning as we were cosily cooking our breakfast in the shelter of the great sketching umbrellas, a line of lumber rafts surged past the camp, scarcely a yard from the bushes on the bank, the raftsmen giving us a cheerful greeting as they went along. We were anxious to continue the acquaintance, but made no haste to follow them, because, in our ignorance of the rapidity of the current, we fancied we could easily overtake them. When we paddled out into the stream a few minutes later, not an



F. D. Seidel

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PUMP AT PÖCHLARN

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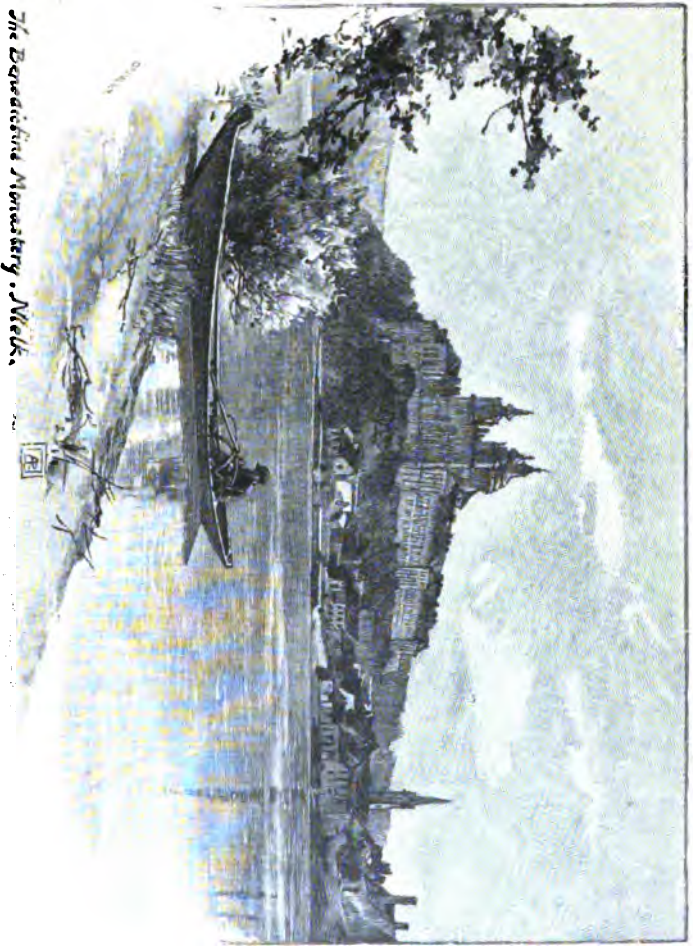
object was in sight on the broad surface of the Danube except a hideous, puffing tow-boat, which left a trail of black smoke behind it, and churned the river into a sea of vicious waves. As it turned out, we never once overtook the rafts while they were drifting down-stream. We passed them several times after they had tied up to the bank for the night, and they as often floated along near our camp in the morning while we were still at our toilets or at breakfast. We learned to know all the raftsmen by sight, but never succeeded in spending a moment in their company until we happened to land at the same village, their last station above Vienna, and within sight of that city.

After leaving Linz we began to look forward to the great bugbears of this part of the river, the Greiner Schwall, the Strudel, and the Wirbel, famous rapids and whirlpools whose very names are sufficient to strike dismay to the heart of the boatman, and bring confusion to the mind of the philologist. Friends of ours who had more than once made the trip from Donaueschingen to Vienna had given us dramatic descriptions of the terrors of this passage, and the oldest cruiser of them all had confessed that he had never ventured to run these rapids, but had always intrusted himself and his canoe to a native flat-boat. The long-shore people wherever we had stopped for the last day or two had volunteered warnings of the dangers that were awaiting us, and we made an unusually early camp the day we left the Traun in a delightful spot opposite Grein, so as to be prepared to take our chances with the river monster in the early morning. Accordingly, after storing our traps with unusual care, and diligently studying the map, we boldly paddled forth bright and early the next day, and rapidly approached the gorge just below the town. As we came near we saw before us a narrow chasm, scarcely a hundred feet wide, where the river forces its way between

precipitous cliffs on the one hand and a lofty, rocky island on the other, with piled up ruins of old castles frowning from the crag on either side. We had no time to hesitate, and no power to stop the onward rush of the canoes, and were in the surging sea of yellow billows before we realized it. The canoes behaved like a charm, shipping not a teaspoonful of water, and riding the waves like water-fowl. So far as our experience went, we were unable to distinguish the Greiner Schwall, the Strudel, and the Wirbel apart, for they seemed like one long rapid. Half-way down, finding that the canoes kept their course with very little guidance, we whipped out our sketch-books and made hasty notes of the scenery in a spirit of bravado which might easily have had unpleasant results.

Long, straight reaches between wild hills carried us to Ybbs—the old Roman Pons Isidis—at the mouth of the river of the same name, and thence to Pöchlarn where we landed for our mid-day meal at a river-side inn with pretty waitresses who made our stay a joy, and on our departure decorated our coats with nosegays in souvenir of our visit. It was at Pöchlarn that Kriemhild, on her journey to Hungary, was so brilliantly entertained by Rüdiger, one of the heroes of the “Nibelungenlied.” Our experience proves that the traditional hospitality of the time has lost none of its charm in the lapses of many centuries.

It was but a short run from here to the heavily-wooded heights where the Benedictine monastery of Melk dominates the surrounding landscape with its magnificent pile of buildings, the most imposing edifice along the whole course of the Danube, and celebrated in song and story since its foundation in the eleventh century. From its grand terrace the full majesty of the river is disclosed to view, as the broad, shining sheet of water extends from the plain far beyond Pöchlarn to the shadowy reaches of the pass below,




The Benedictine Monastery. Wick.

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where it forces its way between rugged heights, serrated with huge crags and castle ruins. There is no grander and no more romantic stretch of the river above Vienna than the few miles below Melk, for the summits are higher and bolder in outline and the rocks more wild and savage in character than in any other gorge. Ruins of old robber castles are perched upon every dizzy pinnacle, deep ravines with tumbling streams score the mountain-sides, and great walls of jagged rock rise above the dark foliage, often forming impassable barriers along the steep declivities. A whirling current carried us all too quickly through this enchantingly beautiful reach, and when at sunset we saw the great ruin of Dürrenstein lift its noble towers against the violet-colored sky, we chose a camp on the opposite bank and watched the last golden gleam of warm sunlight fade from its shattered battlements.

CHAPTER VII

HE harmonizing mists of early morning silvered the tawny surface of the Danube, and softened the jagged outlines of Dürrenstein, on the crowning pinnacle of the rocky spur which thrusts its shoulder boldly out from the wooded flanks of higher summits behind, and stands sentinel over the little village at its base, and the sunny hill-side vineyards and valley beyond. Our camp, in a little glade by a backwater nearly opposite the ruin, was so peaceful and quiet that something of the repose of the place crept over our restless spirits, and, for the first time since we began to coquet with the nervous currents of the whirling stream, we felt a keen desire to pause in our onward rush, an ambition to extend our horizon, to climb above the river-bank, to explore the gorges that fascinated us with their mysterious gloom, to linger yet a while in the great defile where every peak bears the ruins of a noble castle, and every hamlet has a history crowded with tales of minstrelsy and chivalry, and enriched by familiar legends and interesting traditions. Our eyes, keen to observe vigorous outlines of mountain forms, had discovered in this defile the most impressive landscapes the river had yet unfolded before us, and it was with a sense of proper dramatic climax that we found that Dürrenstein—the very name of which set free a flood of childish memories of Cœur de Lion, of Blondel, of ladies fair and chivalrous knights, of robbery and ransom—was the very outpost



EARLY MORNING OPPOSITE DÜRRENSTEIN

of the chain of ruins which had serrated the skyline through the whole defile, and looked down upon the gem of all the river reaches. I may as well confess that my idea of the geographical situation of the castle had hitherto been in the region of hazy uncertainty, if not actually in the humiliating penumbra of utter ignorance. Its position, then, had the added charms of surprise and novelty.

The towers and arches, high on the bare summit of the rock; the half-ruined walls, skirting each projecting spur, and straggling away down the steep, rough declivity, embracing with diverging ramparts and frequent projecting towers the little town on the ledge by the river below, with its castle, its Gothic church edifice, disfigured by utilitarian restoration, and defiled by stores of grain, and confining within the mediæval limits the quaint and crowded jumble of shops and dwellings—the charm of this unique situation, and the vivid memory of the traditions connected with the spot, were stronger even than the wily arguments of the beautiful effects on the river, and the fascinations of the exhilarating, throbbing current that, in spite of paddle, almost swept us past the landing we had chosen. But we conquered both the water and the impulse bred of its restless power, and clambered, broad-chested and full of pride at our victory, up a narrow cañon, with dark, frowning rocks overhead, shale and shingle underfoot, and the refreshing, half-forgotten odors of pine and warm, dry earth in our nostrils. Some distance up the gorge a steep, slippery grass slope extends upward between two rough pine-clad crests to a little depression in the ridge behind the ruin, and to the lower gate of the castle itself. Multicolored butterflies hovered in the sunlight, the grass and rock crevices were gay with flowers, and our botanist gathered, as we went, wild pinks, columbine, and anemone, and panted out to our eager ears the Latin names of scores of mountain plants. Our steps, retarded by these botanical delights, not to say delayed by the unaccustomed exercise, and our lungs expanding with a vigor unknown in the lazy life in the canoes, we were long in reaching the first point from which we could look down upon the wonderful panorama of mountain and river, valley and scattered towns. Our world had indeed been too narrow, our horizon much too low. The giantess

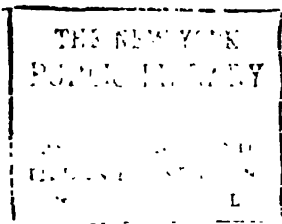
of a river from whose tyranny we had just escaped lay like a shining narrow lake below us, its beautiful curves contrasting with the harsh lines of the mountains, which met in an apparently impenetrable wall beyond. From the height at which we stood we could not see its eddies nor hear the hiss of its rapid flow. We were for the moment quite beyond the power of its spell.

The castle ruin bears so many traces of the destruction of successive sieges and consequent restorations that as it now stands it makes an architectural and archæological puzzle which we felt quite unable to struggle with. In general plan it is not unlike other mediæval strongholds, with yard and keep, watch-towers and gates, banquet-hall and chapel, and with extensive outworks intended to protect the little town of Dürrenstein, at once its weakness and its strength. Utterly neglected by the owner, whoever he may be, the perfection of its masonry and the wonderful quality of the mortar have alone prevented it from becoming long since an ugly mass of worthless rubbish. Most of the later constructions have, indeed, fallen down, or have served so long as convenient quarries that they have almost disappeared. We did not find without some difficulty the traces of the grand old stairway that led from the lower enclosure on the town side up into the pile of buildings at the top and the older part of the castle. Scrambling up a moraine of small stones and mortar, an unsightly avalanche, where the noble flight of steps once mounted the ledge, we came to an irregular open space, now roofless, but with doorways almost perfect and well-preserved window penetrations. From this passages lead into towers on the edge of the precipice, and into a small vaulted chapel, where rows of Byzantine saints cover the walls with dim visions of red and yellow, their halos now but circlets of rough holes where jewels were once embedded in the mortar, and their rigid countenances

disfigured by the weathering of centuries of storms and frosts that have fought nature's battle on this bleak and dizzy crag. The northern wall of the open space just alluded to is a solid ledge of rock hewn square and true, and in this wall is an opening like a doorway, but bearing no traces of hinges or of any other contrivance to close it, which leads into a spacious room cut out of the hard stone. If this was the place where Richard Cœur de Lion was confined, not only could no minstrel song ever have reached his ears, but no sound of the world outside the castle less startling than the crash of thunder ever have broken the hateful quiet of this rock dungeon. The summit of the ledge is reached by a narrow stairway, casually twisting and turning as the inequalities of the surface dictated to the builder, and bears traces of a much-worn passageway and of huge floor-beams. This was once enclosed by walls of great height and exceptional solidity. From the ordinary indications of construction it is proper to assume that here was the original building, enlarged and altered a good deal since the twelfth century, but still preserving much of its old shape. Portions of huge towers and jagged edges of apartment walls, where immense pieces were blown out and down into the chasm below when the Swedes destroyed this stronghold in the Thirty Years' War, now alone remain to give a meagre idea of its grandeur and unique strength. Unapproachable except across the narrow depressed ridge behind the summit, and this entrance defended by overhanging towers and a series of walls, it withstood many sieges, and no doubt harbored many a robber baron whose descendants now enjoy the titles and wealth which throw a dazzling glamour over the methods of their acquisition.

For a long time we enjoyed to the full the view up the defile and down the broad valley where the river, spreading out into a net-work of small streams, disappears in a screen





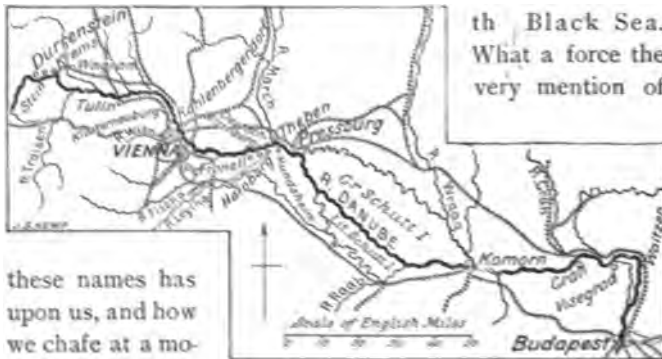
of wooded islands. Away to the south-east the great Benedictine monastery of Göttweig shows an imposing mass of white on the rounded hills that bound the Tullnfeld, and stretch off to mingle their summits with the broad, dark patch of the Wienerwald in the extreme distance. Far beyond the low islands lies Tulln, one of the oldest towns on the Danube, the Comagenæ of the Romans, referred to in the "Niebelungenlied" as an important place, and of historical interest as the point where the great army assembled in 1683 to deliver Vienna from the hands of the hated Turk. Dotted along the hill-sides and in the broad valley on the left bank of the river are many prosperous little towns.

The insidious influence of the guide-book stole upon us unawares as we began to ponder over the history of the region within the range of our uninterrupted vision. Our imaginations, stimulated now by the mention of these names, wandered from the realities of the Napoleonic campaigns, through the dim traditions of crusading days, back to the times when the Roman fleets crowded the narrow channels at the busy stations on the river-bank. The germ of latent restlessness thus grew like a noxious fungus in our minds; contentment and peace vanished like a faint odor. This history was but stale, and the study of it unprofitable. Myths and legends were like poetry and music, to be taken only when the spirit yearns for them. Reality is now before us; teeming modern life awaits us beyond those distant hills. A new nervousness and a new ambition of progress are upon us—new because there opened to our mental vision, at the mention of Islam, broad and fascinating vistas of the Orient, of strange lands and stranger peoples, of types new to our pencils, of colors to tempt the strongest tints on our palettes.

Vienna, hidden from us by the dark mass of the Wienerwald, is, for us at least, the last station before that myste-

rious East towards which the resistless current rushes below us, and whither our impatient canoes shall carry us through bewitching plains of Hungary, wild Carpathian gorges, and savage regions of Servia, Bulgaria, Roumania, and Russia,

to the shores of the Black Sea. What a force the very mention of



FROM DÜRRENSTEIN TO BUDAPEST

these names has upon us, and how we chafe at a moment's delay! Castles and

churches will keep, but what of that great mysterious land beyond those distant hills? Railroads have scarred the fertile plains, and have made the remote valleys and mountain gorges hideous with iron and raw stone. Customs have changed and costumes have disappeared. Even the Turk, so long the master of the lower Danube, has now sullenly withdrawn to the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. We must get on, for in our impatience it seems as if these changes are but the work of a day, not of a generation, and unless we hasten we shall be too late.

Many and many a time had we roundly cursed the canalization of the river which gave us for a water-line only the dull angle of a stone dike. But after leaving the village of Dürrenstein, which at the last moment we found, to our surprise, to be a favorite resort of Viennese artists, and after a brief pause for luncheon at Stein, with its obnoxious river

improvements, we found ourselves very glad to follow the stone dikes through the maze of channels, and later in the day to utilize the stone-work in a way we had never anticipated. We were swept along by a current so rapid that our pace permitted no hesitation in the choice of route among the monotonous willow islands. Through openings in the trees along the bank we occasionally saw pleasant villas and clusters of houses reflected in the glassy lagoons, and here and there a sportsman in search of wild-fowl paddled along behind the dike. Sudden wind and rain squalls swept across the river in the late afternoon, rudely interrupting our sentimental meditations, and approaching darkness forced us at last to land. Under the friendly lee of bushes growing in the crevices of the masonry embankment we at last succeeded in checking our too willing canoes, and drew them up reluctantly, and only after it was evident that we had to choose between the ragged platform of the dike and the sodden swamps which extended for miles away from the main stream. It must be understood, by-the-way, that the embankments follow the large curves of the main channel, not forming a continuous dike like that along a canal or a polder, but leaving here and there an opening where the stiller water from the artificial lagoons joins the flowing stream. In these side branches or lagoons the water is frequently clear and pellucid, and in them, indeed, we found the first and only "blue Danube" we had seen from the start. Our visions of the sunny East had been forgotten in the struggle with the violent squalls and at the prospect of a night on the water, and as we hauled the canoes up on the firm stone-work of the dike and explored the snail-infested morass behind it, we accepted the unæsthetic situation on the well-drained platform, and were even grateful to the engineers who had spoiled the river for sketching, but had improved it, at this point at least, for camping pur-

poses. In the alder swamp behind our camp a great gushing spring of clean Danube water, filtering through the dike, abundantly supplied this the most desirable luxury of a bivouac. There is more than one compensation, we thought, for this annoying desecration of the river scenery.

With the brilliant sunshine and drying air of the next morning returned the eager anticipations of the day before. The river was full of life. Great flat-boats and rafts, old friends from the river Traun, drifted past us as we prepared to start. The raftsmen laboring at the great sweeps gave us the morning greetings with a true ring of hearty and honest good-will, and shouted "Auf baldiges Wiedersehen" as they swung along down the reach. We had long since learned that the old adage that the race is not always to



LUMBER RAFT

the swift might be as well illustrated by the active canoe and the cumbersome raft as by the hare and the tortoise, and we knew that while we were giving our boats their morning toilet the rafts would be surging along at the rate of three or four miles an hour, and would reach their destination near Vienna long before we should.

Tulln, seldom visited by the traveller on account of the superior attractions of Vienna, has more than one relic which repays careful examination and study. Adjoining the much-restored church stands a small decagonal Byzantine baptistery, with circular interior not over twenty feet in diame-

ter. An Early Gothic doorway grafted on the original edifice, and a complete restoration of the whole as late as 1873, have not essentially altered its general appearance, for the naïve irregularity of its plan, the noble proportion of its sides, and the purity of its characteristic ornamentation survive all the eccentricities of ancient as well as modern tinkering. The great church has been distorted by successive additions and rebuildings during several centuries, and little remains of its original Byzantine dignity. As for the little dull town itself, the name, familiar to us in poetry as well as in the recorded events of history, is the chief proof to the casual observer that it is one of the oldest, and was for a long time one of the most important, towns on the Danube. Many of the houses are probably built out of material quarried from the ancient palaces and fine old mediæval churches which, ruined in the severe sieges and conflagrations, had yielded up the treasures of stone and marble which the wanton destruction of Roman temples had contributed to their erection. Little of the spirit of that ancient architecture has survived the change and destruction, for modern Tulln is as plain and meagre of invention as stone and mortar can make it. Of all the great Roman buildings which once stood here, a single broken altar, moss-grown and neglected, in the shadow of the baptistery, remains as a monument to the early splendor of this provincial town. By what chance it has escaped the stone-mason's hammer no one can tell. Perhaps the delicate lines of its mouldings and the grace of its shattered figures may have secured it a place among the paraphernalia of the Byzantine church, and thus it had lost its identity as a relic of heathen worship. Would that the mute eloquence of its pathetic beauty had the voice of a brazen trumpet to denounce the modern restorer, whose touch is death to the charms of all art!

The commonplace aspect of the river-front let us down gently to the ugliness of the railway bridge, which stretches its rigid arm across the fine reach of the river just below Tulln, and screens with its hideous framework the beauties of the landscape below. The up-river navigation became hideously mechanical as well. Puffing, crawling, wheelless steamers groaned and clanked as they pulled their ugly black hulks against the current by a long chain lying in the bed of the stream. Huge iron barges, the most helpless of monsters without the partnership of a tug, added their shapeless masses to the procession of mechanical freaks that indicated the proximity of a large manufacturing city. Distracted by these new dangers to our navigation, and by the vigorous opposition of a strong head-wind, we had scarcely time to notice the great vine-clad hill which crowds the river on the right bank, and shelters under its towering declivity the extensive Augustinian abbey of Klosterneuberg, before we found ourselves slipping along a high stone-faced quay, and saw in the smoky distance the great rotunda on the Prater in Vienna, and the straight lines of the numerous railway bridges there. In the little village of Kahlenbergerdorf our waterman instincts led us to a humble inn, where we found, to our delight, all the raftsmen we had been meeting since the camp at the mouth of the Traun, assembled for their mid-day meal, and for a final friendly glass before returning up-river to start again on another downward voyage. We needed not to know their names; they did not even ask us ours, nor desire to learn about our customary occupation; the masonic bonds of kindred experiences and similar trials and dangers of the long journey made us friends without further introduction. They were old water-rats, they said, and though we could claim to be but the tiniest mice of aquatic tastes, our parting with them in the flickering shadows of the garden, surrounded by bri-

gades of beer-glasses, was tinged with a genuine regret that we should no longer hear their cheery voices of a morning, nor see their honest faces again.

CHAPTER VIII



VIENNA offers an unsightly water-front to the Danube navigator. A succession of huge passenger and railway bridges span the river, and but for the constant busy traffic seen upon them would appear unnecessarily numerous in full proportion to their ugliness. At one end they touch the marshy, desolate shores of the great plain of the Marschfeld, which stretches away to Hainburg and Theben at the Hungarian frontier, and at the other their solid piers and embankments either stand isolated on waste ground, or are supported by ragged and scattered settlements along the bank, with here and there a huge manufactory. From the level of the water a broad veil of smoke rising above the trees is the only visible indication of the proximity of the great city, except it be the bridges themselves and the numerous tow-boats and excursion steamers. The city lies in a semicircular valley between the hills of the Wienerwald and the Danube on both sides of the little river Wien, which drains the hills to the west and empties its muddy flood into the Danube three or four miles below the city. The northern angle of this little stream, in the very heart of Vienna, is connected by a canal with the Danube at some distance above the town, and the Wien has been canalized and enlarged from its junction with the canal to its mouth, so that there is a practicable waterway through the town. The large Danube passenger boats cannot enter the canal, however, but are waited upon by small steamers

which connect with them at the mouth of the Wien. The great park, the Prater, where the International Exhibition of 1873 was held, and a broad flat of rough land adjoining, separate the city from the broad Danube, which, with wonderfully rapid current, rushes off to the east towards the distant hills which mark the Hungarian frontier.

Vienna was originally a Celtic settlement called Vin-dobona, which the Romans seized in the second decade of this era and made into a military post. From the end of the Roman occupation at the close of the sixth century until the beginning of the eleventh century, the town practically disappeared from history. During the Crusades, however, it increased in size and wealth with great rapidity, and since that time has frequently been

the scene of important historical events, not only in the wars with the Mahometans, but in more recent times. The Marschfeld, close at hand, has been a favorite tilting ground for hostile nations from earliest history down to the Napoleonic campaign, when the battles of Aspern and Wagram were fought here. Vienna has its share of stock sights—the beautiful Cathedral of St. Stephen, numerous historical buildings, including the little house where Richard Cœur de Lion was captured, seldom visited by travellers ;



A LITTLE GIRL OF HAINBURG

extensive and monumental public edifices; immense collections of historical relics; superb galleries of works of art, ancient and modern, and places of entertainment and amusement more numerous in proportion to its population than in any other city in Europe. Its citizens comprise a score of nationalities, most of whom represent distinct and important elements in the composition of the empire.

The casual traveller will notice first in Vienna the great speed of the cabs and the skill of the drivers, the wonderfully adorned dray-horses, the prevalence of the kerchief as a head-covering among the women, the shop signs in a dozen languages, the perfect system of tram-ways and omnibuses, and the sudden contrast between the broad and spacious thoroughfares outside the fine boulevards, the Ring Strasse, and the old town within this limit. Even more than Paris, Vienna is essentially a city of apartment-houses and restaurants. These have always been distinct features of Viennese life, and the great rage for building which culminated in the panic at the time of the International Exhibition was induced by the popularity of new apartment-houses which seemed to foretell a great demand for them during the exhibition and later. In consequence of this fever for building, numberless immense caravansaries of apartment-houses were erected in all the new quarters, and the advantages of cheapness and comfort offered by these houses have effectually stifled any tendency among the people of the middle class towards separate residences. One peculiarity of the apartment system in Vienna is the long-established custom of closing the main door at ten o'clock in the evening. After that hour the concierge has the right to collect ten kreutzers (5 cents) from every occupant or visitor who enters the door. He seldom or never waives this privilege. How long this relic of social life of the Middle Ages will last is a much discussed question in Vienna itself.

Acquaintance with the common people in Vienna is made difficult by the atrocious dialect of German they speak there. The popular resorts of the artisan classes, with their musical and theatrical entertainments by local performers of talent, are always amusing, but the wit and humor of the programme is entirely lost to any one who is unfamiliar with the patois. The prevalence of the harsh sound of the letter "X" is one of the most noticeable features of this patois, and a story is told which illustrates the use of this sound and also the manner in which the adopted citizens of the town acquire the common speech. A Hungarian was overheard giving a compatriot assistance in German, and in the course of his lesson he said: "You'll have to learn a new letter before you can speak German as well as I do. For example, when you drink a glass of beer in a party you must say 'Xundheit! (Gesundheit) an die ganz' 'Xellschaft! (Gesellschaft).'" The Viennese are famous for their keen enjoyment and appreciation of humor, a reputation which is borne out by the popular support given to numberless comic papers, profusely illustrated, and all of them full of local



PEASANT WAGON, HAINBURG

hits. The life of the people is best seen on a holiday in the Wurstel Prater, a sort of Viennese Coney Island, or Crystal Palace, where all sorts of out-of-door entertainments are in progress. Here may be studied the characteristic costumes of many nationalities and of many districts, and a more interesting collection of types cannot be found in Europe. The environs of Vienna are particularly attractive. The great formal park and palace of Schönbrunn and of Laxenburg, the rural beauties of Kahlenberg, and the charms of the vine-growing district along the southern slopes of the hills near the town, all attract crowds of merrymakers on every pleasant holiday.

We did not attempt to enter the Danube canal with our canoes, but paddled down to the boat-house of the Lia Ruder Verein near the third great bridge over the main stream. Here we found a delegation of the club to welcome us, for our probable arrival had been announced to them, and the whole establishment was put at once at our disposal. Our canoes found shelter and healing varnish for their wounds and were stored in the company of forty-eight racing boats, from the eight-oar to the single-scutt, while we were carried off bodily by the members of the club and comfortably installed in a hotel. The inexhaustible hospitality and cheery companionship of the members of the Lia Ruder Verein would never tire our muse were we to start the song agoing. This hospitality, not only general, but particular and special, so gilded our stay in the city that the bitterness of parting from Danube and canoes gave but a flavor to the joys of congenial society. One perfect summer morning we saw the last of the club-house as we shot the railway bridge and cast a hasty glance past the bellying mizzen of the bounding canoe. No less absorbing feeling than the glorious sense of freedom and irresponsibility as we found ourselves again on the river would have excused to our consciences



A HUNGARIAN FERRY

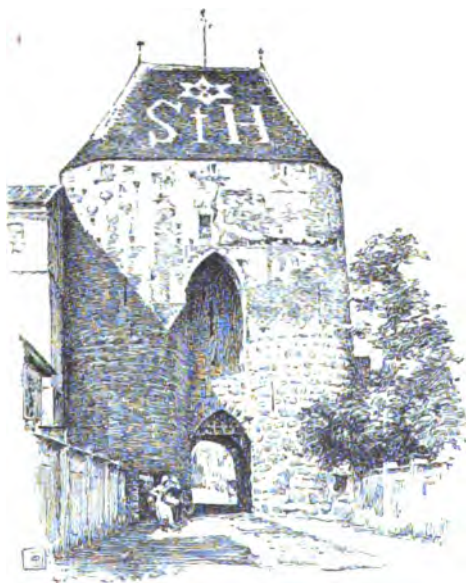
the joy we felt at leaving Vienna. But the memory of its kindness and courtesy has survived all ephemeral sentiments.

After a short half-day's paddle down a tossing current, past scores of floating mills and along miles of stone embankments, we came to the point where the hills again close in from both sides and form a wall along the eastern horizon. Though less imposing than some other mountain ranges we had passed, and, indeed, very narrow where it touches the river, this is the barrier where for many centuries constant and successful resistance was kept up against the advance of the Mahometans. Here for a long time was the extreme eastern bulwark of Christendom, the advance outposts of the West; and here, after countless campaigns, the hereditary enemy suffered the crushing defeats which, a little over a century and a half ago, marked the beginning of the decline of his power in Europe. This

gateway to the great Carpathian plain, and the political as well as geographical frontier of Hungary, is as perfect a natural rampart as could be imagined. At the very river's edge rise, on either bank, high isolated hills, covered now with masses of ruins, but formerly part of a complete system of fortifications perfectly commanding the river from both sides. These fortifications enclosed, as the ruins now plainly show, the little town of Hainburg, on the right bank, and Theben, a few miles below on the other side of the river, the highest Danube town in the Hungarian kingdom.

The sentimental spirit generated in us on the occasion of the happy visit to Dürrenstein, though veiled a little by the distractions of Vienna, was now stimulated afresh as we landed in Hainburg. We had accidentally chosen it as

a place for a few days' quiet work, and found that we had stumbled unawares into a little walled town full of archæological and historical interest. Through an ancient arched gateway near the railway station, Blutgasse (blood lane) winds steeply up between crowded whitewashed houses to a broad open square,



THE WIENERTHOR, HAINBURG

where a large church with intricately ugly copper-covered spire throws a shadow over rows of peasant women squatting on the pavement beside their baskets of market stuff, their blue dresses and bright kerchiefs adding an agreeable note of color to the blond tones of the surrounding architecture. Blutgasse! No stretch of the imagination is required to picture the carnage when the Turks, hunting the inoffensive citizens through the streets with fanatical ferocity, left only one alive to tell the tale. This narrow lane, offering a possible escape to the river, was piled high with headless corpses, and the blood ran in streams under the oaken gate into the turbid river, which washed the foundations of the town walls. Tradition says that the one survivor was a woman, who hid herself, with a small store of provisions, in a disused chimney, where for three days she listened to the horrid sounds of the massacre.

During the long centuries while history is silent this little town, with the neighboring region, has been the theatre of many another thrilling and dramatic episode now only faintly echoing in the murmur of tradition. On the whole length of this great water highway there has been no busier spot than this from the time when the goaded slaves first towed the ponderous Roman galleys against the rushing stream up to its docks until its complete destruction in the struggle against the Turks. Indeed, the whole neighboring country bears abundant witness to the importance of this point. Extensive Roman remains are scattered all over the fertile plateau a short distance above Hainburg, near the village of Deutsch-Altenburg and Petronell, where Carnuntum once stood. Military engineers, since the earliest mediæval days, have burned the shattered marbles for lime, and have built into hastily constructed defences tiles and mouldings, capitals and cornices; and in times of peace the local masons, with more deliberation and less excuse, have completed the

work of destruction. Recent archæological explorations have uncovered the ruins of an amphitheatre, of villas and baths, and latterly a commendable local interest has been taken in these relics, a proof of which is the popularity of the little museum where are stored a multitude of objects of Roman origin. The farmers now point with pride to the crumbling ruins of the great triumphal arch, which they but recently considered an unsightly excrescence on the fair surface of a broad wheat-field, and speak of Carnuntum as familiarly as if its glories were but of recent date.



THE TOWN WALL, HAINBURG

Nearer Hainburg the hill-sides are scored with grassy mounds of ancient earthworks, and on the high, isolated peak behind the town the extensive ruin of a mediæval castle is a landmark visible for many miles both up and down the river. Immense Government tobacco factories and a school for military cadets have somewhat disturbed the mediæval aspect of the streets, and a railway has ruthlessly cut through the walls, and trains crunch and rumble high up on a row of ugly arches that disfigure the quay. The old side walls, with frequent towers of irregular shape and at various angles, converge from the water-front, and, narrowing the

town limits as they go, join by a solid cross wall at the foot of the hill, and then clamber up the precipitous, rugged declivity to the angles of the great château which covers every yard of the summit. The hill itself is gay with numberless varieties of wild-flowers and shrubs—a botanist's paradise. In Alfred Parsons' botanical note-book is the following information concerning this region :

“The Schlossberg behind the town of Hainburg is very rich in plants—one large rock garden. On it grow several kinds of sedum and campanula, dwarf iris, coronilla, genista, two species of dianthus (one of which has white fringed petals and a very strong scent), a yellow and a pink allium, wall-rue, thalictrum, and many other plants and shrubs. In the woods around the town are pyrola, hepatica, Turk's-cap lily, and there I also noticed a very handsome leaf of an umbelliferous plant. The bladder-nut is a common shrub, and on the borders of the woods grows a melampyrum with yellow flowers which turn orange when older, and have a tuft of bright mauve leaves above them. Masses of this, with the slender white spikes of the small St. Bruno's lily (*Anthericum liliastrum*) growing up through it, had a very beautiful effect. In the cornfields grow poppies and daisy-like flowers, also a beautiful annual larkspur with purple and blue flowers, and a pale, bluish-white nigella. On the stony slopes at Theben I first saw an everlasting flower with pinkish-mauve blossoms, which grows abundantly east of this point. The commonest flowers on the sandy patches near the river are the yellow snap-dragon (butter and eggs), pink ononis, and a pale-green eryngium, very prickly. In the meadow at the mouth of the Raab I saw *Eryngium amethystinum*, and a herbaceous clematis, drooping flowers with blue petals and a yellow centre.”

From the ruined walls, high above the quiet town and the glittering expanse of the river, threading its intricate way

through the flat and fertile plain to the shadowy heights rising above the smoke of Vienna, we could look far beyond the castle-crowned rocks of Theben and the great hill of Pressburg, over the rich plain of Hungary checkered with growing crops, stretching away to a mysterious horizon distant as the sky itself. The wooded hills of the boundary range tempted us with their shady paths and wealth of wild-flowers, and we found new beauties at every turn, new delights in every glimpse of the fertile valleys, where white-washed villages shimmered in the sunlight among the yellow fields of ripening corn. On rare occasions we met Hungarian peasant men with queer hussar jackets and breeches, round hats with cockade of badger hair, and wonderfully high-heeled boots, and sturdy peasant women with stiff, outstanding short skirts, and high riding-boots like the men—skirmishers of the host of novel types and costumes the Danube had in store for us. Steep and narrow footways lead over the hills three miles or so to the nearest village of Hundsheim, which, quite off the highway, and therefore as yet unspoiled by the touch of the modern architect, is so perfect a specimen of a rural hamlet, practically unchanged since mediæval times, that we made it the goal of our evening expeditions. Here, as in all the neighboring villages, it has been the custom, dating from the early days of conflict with the Turk, to build the houses each like a tiny castle, with court-yard and arched gateway, with few and often no windows on the street, and solid high walls on all sides. At Hundsheim two parallel irregular streets straggle down opposite sides of a stony stream which serves as a public washing-place, and furnishes abundant water for all purposes. Each house is like its neighbor in main lines, differing only in unimportant details. All are whitewashed with scrupulous care, and although the streets are little more than rough gullies, there is a refreshing air of pros-



ALFRED PARSONS.

HUNDSHEIM

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perity about the place. The inhabitants cultivate the rich fields for miles around the village, pasture their countless sheep and cattle on the adjacent mountain-sides, and at night gather live-stock and farm wagons into the enclosure of each tiny castle and retire behind its ponderous gates as if the Turk were still a threatening enemy.

One bright morning—the 27th of July, to be accurate—a crowd of new-made friends assembled to see us pack the canoes and launch them in the eddying stream. The hospitable miller, who had housed the delicate craft for us in an empty shed, had not kept secret the hour of our departure, and there were hundreds watching us as we hoisted sail to cross the frontier with speed and in sporting style. A short half-hour, past bold cliffs and picturesque ruins on one side and a wooded bank on the other, brought us to the muddy March, pouring a sluggish, muddy flood into the yellow Danube. In another moment we landed in Hungary, under the overhanging ruins of the great Castle of Theben, which, with its fellow at Hainburg, guarded the entrance to the wealthy kingdoms along the great water highway. In the little whitewashed town, crowded into a narrow valley behind the castle, the musical accent of the Magyar tongue confirmed to our ears what our eyes had readily discovered—the presence of another type of face, of figure, and of character. The aspect of the village, too, was new to us, and suggested a warmer sun, longer summer, and habitual out-of-door life. We saw little gardens filled with bright flowers, tiny court-yards, with tables and benches shaded by trellises of grape-vines and gourds, and met a cheery hospitality at the rude inn, where Maria, the shy beauty of the village, soon forgot her coyness in her delight at our enjoyment of the spicy viands new to our palates. In kerchief and short petticoat, she had no rival between the ruins of Petronell and the château of Pressburg; but



GOSSIPS, HUNDSHEIM

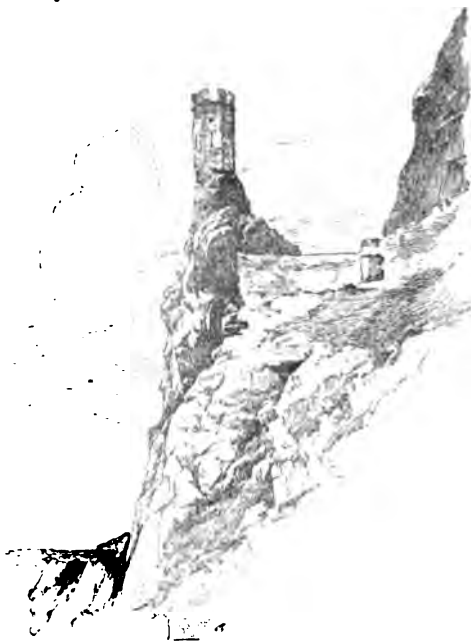
when she hesitatingly yielded to our importunities for a sitting, and appeared, after a brief absence, in black silk frock, booted and gloved, and with parasol in hand, our pencils were too loyal to her peasant charms to attempt the caricature. No visitors of our nationalities had left any impressions on the minds of the simple folk here, but the mention of England and America was, as it always is in Hungary, our best introduction. The active sympathies of these two countries with the people struggling for freedom

in '48 are still gratefully remembered by the whole nation, and the traditions of that sympathy are handed down loyally to the rising generation. At the post-office, where we went to buy our first Hungarian stamps, the gossiping old postmaster and his wife—characters not unfamiliar in the rural offices in other countries—were so overwhelmed by the extent of our requirements and the number of our letters that the wheels of official machinery refused to work at all. After they had carefully read all the addresses, and had marvelled long at the range of our correspondence, we succeeded in communicating to their dazed senses the fact that we wanted to buy a stock of stamps of various denominations.

“What! so much money for stamps? Impossible!” protested the old man and his echoing wife. “You are already sending away florins’ and florins’ worth on these letters!”

“But we want a stock of stamps to keep for our convenient use,” we urged.

“Yes, yes, you want to use them; but why don’t you buy them as you need them?” was the reply, as he shut the



THE WATCH-TOWER, THEBEN

drawer under his elbow, apparently loath to part with any of its precious contents.

Arguments were useless, and we gave up the notion of securing a variety, and tempered our demand to a humble request for a few ten-kreutzer stamps for foreign postage.

“Ah, no!” he said. “I can’t let you have any ten-kreutzer stamps, for the sheets haven’t been broken into yet, and it is near the end of the month, when I make up my books, and I can’t have my accounts confused by selling ten-kreutzer stamps to any one.”

We compromised on a double number of five-kreutzer stamps, the ones in use for local postage, and ornamented our envelopes with effigies of Franz Josef until they looked like the walls of a chromo-dealer’s shop.

CHAPTER IX



TURDY girls, returning from market with veritable Eiffel towers of empty tubs on their backs, strode up the steep banks from the landing as we fled from the enervating luxuries of the inn at Theben and hastened to paddle towards the busy little town of Pressburg, boasting a new railway bridge, as ugly a château as man has ever devised, and as pleasant parks and gardens as ever soldier and nursery-maid chose for their public flirtations. It claims as its chief historical distinction the honor of having crowned within its walls the Hungarian kings since the dynasty was founded. It is a gay little place, with tastefully decorated shop-windows, and signs everywhere in the Hungarian language. In a brief two hours' paddle we had passed beyond the limit of a distorted dialect of German, and now heard only the soft music of the Magyar speech. No phase of our journeying was more interesting than the experience with this abrupt philological frontier.

Below Pressburg the Danube branches into three sinuous arms, cutting the great low plain into two long irregular islands, little better than swamps for the most part—at least, as far as our horizon extended. The canalization of the river, which practically comes to an end in this territory, makes the channel quite plain, and diverts the flow of water from the tortuous branches where the villages cluster on the muddy banks. On the first day after leaving Pressburg the



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PEASANT GIRL, THEBEN

active arguments of hunger persuaded us to explore one of these lagoons in search of an inn, and after a while we came upon a straggling collection of low shingled houses gathered into the semblance of a village by low fences of wattled willow. With a microscopic vocabulary of Hungarian words we succeeded in getting food to satisfy our colossal appetites, and in holding the friendliest relations with the bronzed peasants, who were fast courting oblivion through the medium of strong wine in the Italian-like hostlery. Here we first made acquaintance with Hungarian dust and Danube mud, an intimacy which ripened as we went on, until at last no adjectives would fitly apply to the one or describe the

disgusting characteristics of the other. The willow, too, in this first great flat stretch forced itself on our notice, and began to aggravate us with its monotony, turning an otherwise agreeable landscape into a series of object-lessons in simple perspective. But even the willow came to an end here after a while, and for an agreeable change we welcomed

an open country, with broken mud banks, where we heard the plaintive music of shepherds' pipes, saw stalwart swineherds against the sky, and startled, as we drifted past, great droves of wild-looking cattle cooling themselves in the shallows. The life on the bank became at intervals more busy, and all sorts of domestic operations were carried on in the open air along the muddy shores. Whole families splashed about in the shallow water as little heedful of our presence as if we belonged to them. The River Raab sneaks into the Danube in the guise of a lesser side lagoon, and but for our delightful flower-carpeted camp in sight of the group of barges at its mouth and within the sound of the tattoo of many mills, we should scarcely remember it as a feature of our trip. A brief pause at Komorn, regular and uninteresting architecturally as most Hungarian towns are, did not increase our desire for exploration, and we voted, since our time was limited, to land in the future only at places which, smaller and less Germanized by the commerce of the river, would probably be more characteristic and picturesque. But the great Cathedral of Gran—Esztergom is the sonorous Hungarian name—rising above the ruins of a great brick fortress on a prominent height among vineyard slopes, made



HUNGARIAN CATTLE

us accept a speedy amendment to this resolution, and under the lee of its bridge of boats we drew up alongside of one of the great arks which recall the naval architecture of the pre-deluge period. We sampled the characteristic cookery of its famous restaurant, and passed an hour or two of wild excitement over the wonderful colors in the market-place, where shoulder-high heaps of scarlet paprika (big sweet peppers) set the key for a combination of rich and varied tones that would have exhausted the palette of an old Venetian painter; and when at last an inviting breeze rippled the water, we forced ourselves away and sailed down the beautiful reaches among grand hills, our eyes still full of the kaleidoscopic sparkle of enchanting Esztergom.

Our frisky boats lost the breeze in the narrow, crooked defile below, and we settled ourselves to a quiet drift under the great ruins of Visegrád, where villas, bath-houses, and a level road, gay with ladies and children, marked the little village as the first sybaritic outpost of Budapest. Preoccupied with the beauties of the scenery, we did not at first notice the frantic waving of the Union-jack in the hands of some one on the shore, but we soon turned our bows in the direction of this unmistakable invitation to land, and were welcomed on shore by an English gentleman, a summer resident there, who explained that, having read of our trip in a Vienna newspaper, he and his family had been on the watch for us for many days. Such hearty hospitality as he offered us could not be refused, although it was the Delilah to our Samson strength of purpose, and we went ashore. A party of ladies and gentlemen was speedily formed, and we made an excursion up the hill, through pleasant groves and along shady paths, to the ruins of the old castle of the Hungarian kings, who resided here as early as the eleventh century. Matthew Corvinus enlarged and improved the castle, and it was long the chief stronghold of this region. The royal

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crown of Hungary was once concealed in a deep pit cut in the solid rock under one of the towers, and there are various other notable historical legends connected with the place. Another castle near the water's edge, although it is partially restored, had a sentimental interest for us because we were informed that it had been intended for the summer residence of the unfortunate Prince Leopold. The former commander-in-chief of the Hungarian army in the revolution of 1848, General Görgei, lives quietly in a pleasant villa high above the river. Surrounded by his family and busying himself with all sorts of mechanical operations, to which he is devoted, the old general appears to have secured the greatest blessing known to man—contentment. The weight of the forty odd years that have passed since he gave up his sword has not bowed his straight figure, and his dark eyes still have the fire of youth in them. At his own request we went to call on him, and found him, like all the men of Kossuth's time, enthusiastically fond of America, and grateful for the sympathetic aid and comfort of the whole English-speaking race. Lingered long in his company, the summer twilight stole upon us before we knew it, and warned us to seek a camp. The tempting offers of hospitality so heartily given, the fascinations of the people and the place, and the unique charm of society which is peculiar to Hungary alone, all these and many other delights made it next to impossible for us to take our leave. But at last we hardened our hearts, pushed off, waved a last farewell to the young ladies who accompanied us a short distance in a wherry, and paddled out into the glowing twilight.

The frequent villas that dot the shores below Visegrád we now looked upon through glasses of different color. Only twenty-four hours before we would have named them landscape-spoilers, and would have turned our faces from them as we passed. But we had caught the infection of



VISEGRÁD

the happy land: the microbe which, once in possession, never leaves the willing victim, had begun to attack us, one and all, and we saw possible friends in every pretty garden and in every luxurious pleasure-boat. At this moment less than ever did a great city have any attraction for us, and we wildly planned to cut Budapest altogether, and continue our joyful cruise down into the great wild region beyond, where the river life is active and varied, and where our days should be a succession of pleasant experiences and surprises — where, indeed, we might learn to know, with an intimacy that only such a free life makes possible, the people in their unaffected, simple existence.

Just above Waitzen, a good-sized town with prison and manufactories and busy quay, with barges and peasant market-boats, the river bends gracefully around to the south, divides past a long flat island covered with fertile farms, and then loses itself in the distance where the grand old fortress on the summit of Blocksberg overhangs the suburb of Ofen (Buda in Hungarian) on the right bank, and looks down upon the imposing façades of Pest on the opposite shore. An accident, happy in its result, but threatening for a moment a painful disaster, made a pause at Budapest a necessity. Sudden summer thunder-storms swept



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over the river from the cloud-compelling summits in the west, and then cleared away with a strong wind, which, blowing across the current, soon stirred up what the ocean pilots would call a "nubbly" sea. The temptation to hoist sail and triumphantly dash past the populous waterfront of the great city was not long to be resisted, and soon the sparkling river was enlivened by three pairs of snow-white sails. Open-mouthed millers stared at us as we swept past their groaning floats, throwing up spray like so many yachts. Suddenly a polished rudder gleamed in the air, following the total eclipse of one of the canoes, crew and all. A multitude of objects tossed on the waves and bobbed away down-stream, while the humiliated canoist came up, shining like a seal, and righted his water-logged craft. A landing was made, not without difficulty, more soaked and ruined articles were recovered than it would have been thought possible to stow under the mahogany hatches, and we were glad to seek refuge, after the canoe was baled out, in the hospitable boat-house of the Neptune Ruder Verein, a mile or two below the scene of the accident, among the pleasant groves of the Margarethen-Insel (Margitsziget).

We had often remarked that in our independent way of travelling constant variety was the rule, and monotony of incident never possible. If we could have had the choice, we certainly would not have introduced ourselves to the rowing men of the Neptune Verein until our fleet could have passed inspection with credit. But the unexpected event of a capsized forced us to swallow our pride, and we accordingly bundled the wet things out upon the float, and stowed the canoes away among the slender racing craft in the boat-house. Not only had the accident taken the bloom off our self-confidence, but it had upset many pet theories which had from the start been quite undisputed. Our



F. L. M. M.

A FAMILY WASH

blind faith in the value of india-rubber as a water-proof material had hitherto not been disturbed, but on this the occasion of the first real test elaborate rubber boat bags and air-tight hatches only seemed to aggravate the disaster; for all these contrivances seemed not only to actually suck the water in, but to hold it perfectly when it was inside. We hereafter limited our belief in water-proof receptacles to the ordinary well-corked glass bottle of commerce in which we kept our matches.

What a medley of gypsy music, song, and csárdás, of beautiful women and cheery, sympathetic men, of abundant

hospitality and general good-fellowship, Budapest now remains to us in our memory! It wellnigh proved our Capua, for, being only human, we could but yield to the enchantment. Who shall adequately describe the fascination of the native gypsy music, with its throbbing, wailing strains and its intoxicating rhythm? What writer's pen or artist's pencil shall picture the csárdás, with its Oriental action and its exhilarating intensity? It would be easier to convey by words or by lines the sense of a strange perfume than to analyze and explain the charms of the music or the attractions of the dance. Prosaically described, the csárdás is a dance for one or for any number of couples, and is performed in a great variety of ways, the partners sometimes dancing apart and sometimes together. The common fashion we observed during our brief experience, and the one we naturally indulged in as the nearest allied to the dancing we were familiar with, is for the lady to rest her hands on the gentleman's shoulders, who, in his turn,



J. S. Galt

AN ARK-BOAT

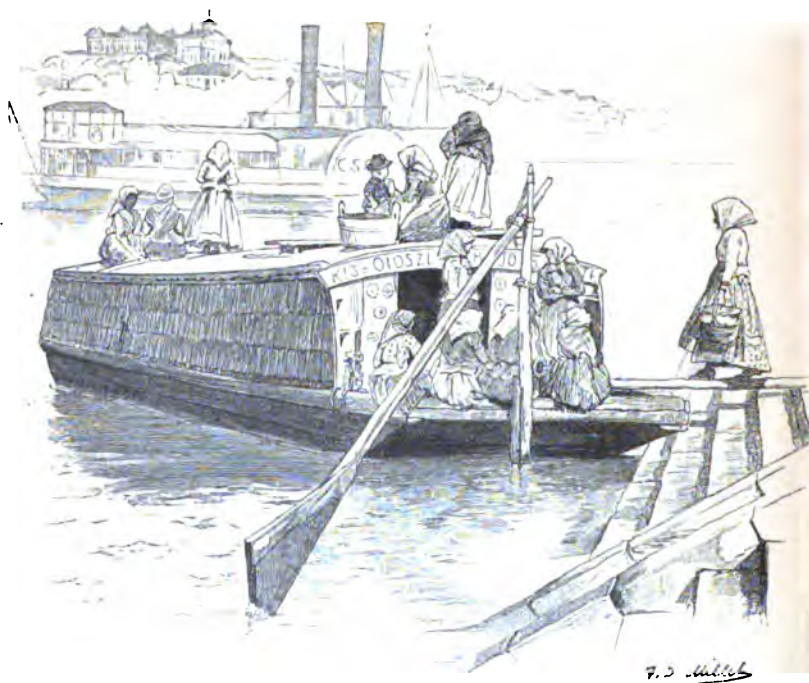
places his hands on her waist. A long-cherished admiration for the dance forbids me to attempt to give any notion of the step or of the vibrating action of the body, truly interpreting in motion the spirit of the music, which, with

sweet insinuating melodies, wild and ever wilder bursts of mad chords, lends the contagion of its tireless vigor to the dancers, and sways them like reeds by the power of its savage harmonies.

CHAPTER X

HERE is the same indefinable charm about Budapest that there is in the gypsy music. This charm is a spiritual one. The situation of the city is delightful, the streets are clean, the architecture agreeable, and all the comforts of life are at the traveller's command. In these respects the city is not unlike many others, but in its people it is unique and always will be as long as the Magyar tongue exists, or a drop of the rich Eastern blood remains in a descendant of the race. Our experience in Vienna was but the prologue to the hospitalities at Budapest. Under the guidance of a host of friends, chief of whom was Mr. Louis Gerster, the resident Vice-consul of the United States, we saw the town in the most agreeable manner possible. Visits to the museums of art and of antiquity, with their stores of treasures; inspection of the famous wine-cellars, with the miles of wine-butts and millions of bottles; drives in the parks; an excursion up the river in a special steamer with ladies and gentlemen, when we danced the csárdás for a day and a night almost without intermission; a trip down-stream to eat the delicious sterlet, fresh from the Danube and cooked with paprika, after the fisherman's taste—our stay was one round of jollity. But for the frequent sight of the great river with its hurrying current which urged us to depart, we might have prolonged our stay until snowfall, such were the fascinations that encompassed us.

The water-front of Budapest, with its masses of extensive buildings and its populous quays, is the noblest spectacle of similar order in the whole course of the Danube. Within the last few years the city has made marvellous strides in the direction of enlargement and improvement. Three bridges now cross the river between Pest on the left bank and Buda on the right, the two principal sections of the town. The upper one is of iron, on huge stone buttresses, the middle one a graceful suspension-bridge, built about forty years ago, and the lower of iron, and built to carry a



COUNTRY MARKET-BOAT, BUDAPEST

railway and to serve for foot-passengers as well. Large hotels have been built, a fine new park laid out, new parliament-houses on the river-front almost completed, the squares and public places adorned with fountains and statues, and entire new quarters covered with fine buildings, all within the past fifteen years. These improvements have worked the modernization of the people as well as the town, and the native costumes once so common in the streets are almost a rarity now. The sulphur springs at Buda and on Margarethen-Insel, famous since Roman times, form one of the chief attractions to visitors, and afford an uncommon luxury to the residents. The bathing establishments are of unparalleled extent and great splendor, particularly on the island, where the delights of the beautiful park enhance the popularity of the baths. Up to within a few years there was a large cheap public bath where people of both sexes and all ages, after having been cupped by an attendant as many times as they could afford to pay for, according to the old faith in the efficacy of blood-letting, huddled together, often nearly if not quite naked, in a large common plunge-basin of steaming sulphur-water, where they remained for hours, looking like the lost souls in Dante's "Inferno." This promiscuous bathing is now no longer permitted, for this with many other old customs among the common people has disappeared before the advance of civilization.

The sun was well down behind the hills before we launched the canoes on the day we left Budapest. The strains of the *csárdás* still echoed in our ears; our minds were confused by the succession of novel experiences we had enjoyed during the past four days; the river seemed to rush on with a giddier swirl than ever before, and a strong head-wind did its best to discourage our progress. It was not until we had lost sight of the hills near the city, late on the

following day, that we realized we were now at length fairly afloat in the heart of the vast open plain which extends to the Carpathians. The corner of this plain which we had crossed below Pressburg had given us a hint of what we might expect in the way of monotonous scenery, but it had disclosed to us little of the charm of the great river which now enchanted us. High bluffs of firm, hard earth alternated with stretches of densely-wooded low banks. Tree-embowered villages nestled long distances apart, under vineyard-clad slopes, or among fields rich with maize and ripening wheat. The river began to be the focus of rural activity. Wherever mills were anchored in the strongest currents, the peasants camped on the adjoining banks, with ox-carts full of freshly-winnowed corn, awaiting their turn for the grinding. Women vigorously beating clothes with wooden mallets enlivened the scene with their laughter and gossip, and formed fascinating groups, with every combination of rich color. Everywhere were sunshine and laughter and song. Cries of "Eljen!" (hurrah!) and "Hova megy?" (where are you going?) greeted us constantly as we passed, shouting in reply, "Fekete Tengerig" (to the Black Sea). The cheery vivacity of the people, their unfailing courtesy and agreeable manners, had won our affectionate admiration from the first, and the more we came to know them, the more we found reason to honor our earliest impressions of them.

The tyranny of limited space forbids lengthy description of more than one of the many interesting villages we explored in the first day or two below Budapest, and Duna Földvár of cheerful memory may be taken as a type of all. The village itself is, like most Hungarian places, a collection of low houses along broad streets, laid out in rectangular plan, gullied and dusty, and shaded by rows of small acacia-trees. A great barren market square forms the usual prom-



WASHER-WOMEN

inent feature of the village, and from this arid waste straight, wide thoroughfares lead out into the open country behind, and casually end there, like the streets of the great shanty cities in the Far West. The architectural examples found in Duna Földvár are not notable; indeed, the inscription over the church door, "Isten-Gondviselésnyujtottdiszújalkotrám," was the only detail in relation to architecture that fixed our attention. A few sleepy market-women sat in the broad shadow of the ugly town-hall, and, except for the constant coming and going of many graceful maidens bearing tubs of Danube water on their heads, there was little or no movement on the streets. All the life of the village concentrated itself under the sandy bluff by the river-side. A procession of barefooted girls continually passed

along the shore. Peasant men stripped to the waist, with their divided-skirt-like trousers rolled up into the narrowest compass, washed their cattle and wagons in the shallow water, while a busy army of men and women unloaded the barges and carried the heavy freight to the warehouses. At every available point of the crowded river-front washer-women, with their petticoats wet to the waist, stood knee-deep in the stream, and accompanied their lively chatter with the vigorous tattoo of their active mallets. In the shadow of the houses near the landing great piles of water-melons were the centres of groups of all ages, every individual busy with the luscious, juicy fruit. On all sides we saw flashing rich color, beautiful types, picturesque costumes, graceful action, and the bustle of ceaseless activity. The sparkling river, the brilliant colors glowing in the bright August sun, and the multitude of figures tempting the pencil fairly dazed us at first, and we could only rush enthusiastically from point to point, finding each new group and each new incident more fascinating than the other.

While we were busy sketching on the river-front a young gentleman approached, introduced himself, and said he had been sent as the emissary of a party of ladies and gentlemen who were about to go on a picnic excursion, and desired the honor of our company. They had heard all about our cruise from the Budapest papers, he added, and were anxious to show us some attention. We felt obliged to decline the invitation, for the day was fast advancing, and the subjects before us were both fascinating and numerous, and the young man, with proper apologies for disturbing us, withdrew. Towards the end of the afternoon we paddled off, much depressed by the necessity of leaving practically untouched the wealth of picturesque material in the little river town, and, indeed, very loath to seek a camp. Just after we rounded the point below the town we heard the

DUNA FÖLDVÁR



ALÉXIO FAKONDI

1917
MILITARY
OFFICE
AUGUST 15 1917
MILITARY OFFICE
OR

strains of gypsy music, and soon caught sight of a large boat filled with ladies and gentlemen, apparently waiting for us in mid-stream. In a few moments we were alongside, and were very much pleased to find that it was the same picnic party which had begged for the honor of our presence some hours before. Indeed, it came out that the polite emissary had lingered about and watched our departure, and then had hurried on horseback to warn the party of our approach. We suffered ourselves to be piloted ashore, where, in a pleasant grove by the water's edge we found a large table spread, a dancing-floor arranged, and everything in order for a genuine Hungarian festivity. A band of ten gypsies furnished the music, a dozen young ladies, with as many young gentlemen, a few men of middle age and a proper number of chaperons, made up the party, and it comprised, as we soon found out, the professional men of the town—the lawyers and doctors with their families and intimate friends. We lost no time in becoming acquainted, for all formalities of introduction were soon over, and then the feast began. Like every similar entertainment in Hungary, speech-making was a great feature of the dinner. Every one had to do his share of this, and when the last toast was drunk, a mixed Hungarian-American sentiment, we all took partners, and the csárdás began.

Hours passed like magic, and the fast-waning afternoon light warned us to be off. We had scarcely shouted the last "good-bye" across the shining water when a violent wind arose, drowning with its rushing sound the tinkle of the music in the grove, and changing the placid stream into a turbulent sea of dashing waves. Night settled down with unusual haste, and in the increasing darkness we were tossed and buffeted along, sometimes half swamped, unable to find a landing on the steep, high banks, not daring to

venture out into the raging stream, nor yet to approach too near the shore. The distorting gloom so changed the usual landmarks that we could not distinguish trees from bushes, and could only judge of our distance from the shore by the sound of the angry water beating against the bank. On we went, driven by the wind, which seemed to increase with every fresh gust. Wherever we tried to land, the breaking



WATER-CARRIERS, DUNA FÖLDVÁR

waves warned us that unless we found a sheltered spot we should pound our canoes to pieces before we got them ashore. The noise of the storm made it difficult for us to hear each other shout, and it was only by constant piping on our shrill whistles that we kept our little fleet together. The situation at last became so serious that we were about to give up all attempt to land, and were on the point of



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scudding down in mid-stream until the storm should abate, preferring to risk capsizing there rather than to endanger the canoes by further trials at landing on a lee shore. Just as we came to this decision, however, an unusually heavy squall struck us, and at the same moment we heard the unmistakable swash of the water among willow bushes close at hand. We knew then that we should find temporary shelter and shallow water among the willows, for the unusual height of the river had covered all low places. We also knew we could manage to land from the shoal water on a flooded meadow; so we pushed boldly on, and passing the yielding barrier, which fortunately was but a rod or two wide, found ourselves in a quiet shelter behind the screen of slender bushes, and at the edge of a grove of large trees with solid turf underneath. By the light of our lanterns we hauled up the canoes, arranged them so as best to shelter our camp-fire from the blast, rigged our tents, and then cooked our supper in comfort. The storm continued the greater part of the night, and we slept to the howling of the wind in the trees and to the dull roar of the Danube billows.

Now, as we advanced, the river rose higher and higher, flooding all the swamps and low-lying woodlands, and spreading out into broad lakes over the meadows. Once only, in a whole day's paddle, did we find a fishing-station, and this was kept by men from a village fifteen miles inland, who take regular turns in visiting their homes during the long months when fishing is profitable. Their great wigwam had bunks for a dozen men, and miles of nets were drying in the sun. As we had been accustomed to land at a village at least once a day to replenish our larder with fresh meat, vegetables, fruit, and wine, we found our cupboards rather empty after a day or two in the wilderness, and we welcomed the sight of the fishing-camp, for we knew

we could procure there an abundance of sterlet, the best fish found in the Danube. Our arrival was a great event in the camp; and, mutually interested in each other's boats and mode of life, we spent an hour there, and then departed, with a generous supply of sterlet taken from the fish-car which was anchored in the stream, and covered with the stings of mosquitoes, which hovered in a cloud over the whole point.

The steady current and favorable winds did not long permit us to fancy ourselves explorers in an undiscovered country, but carried us easily on, at the rate of thirty or forty miles a day, out of the swamps and forests to the region of vineyards and dry hills and villages. In a measure, as we went along and the landscape varied, so did the costumes change in character, the types differ, and new peoples hail our fleet with cries in strange languages. Drifting along within a yard or two of the shore, we entered into temporarily intimate relations with the villagers at their customary occupations, and were always welcomed by them with unobtrusive but hearty familiarity, which filled our days with pleasant little episodes and delightful experiences. The long-populous town of Mohács, with extensive and ugly coal-yards, did not at first tempt us to land, but groups of beautiful children and young girls, who assembled to watch us as we stayed our all too rapid course along the shore at the very door-steps of the houses, suggested such possibilities there that we had perforce to go ashore and see what the place was like. At our accustomed refuge in all these villages—the public bath-house—we found among the crowd of people gathered at the landing a boy of about a dozen years of age, who, to our great astonishment, addressed us in English, with an unmistakable American accent, and said that his grandfather hoped we would call on him before we went away. A few moments later we were



PEASANT GIRLS AT MOHÁCS

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATION

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toasting America, England, and Hungary in the purest of Tokay from the original bottles, sealed in the memorable year of '48. Our host, Colonel Fornét, was a fine type of the Hungarian patriot, who, like so many others, had returned to his native country, after years of exile, to end his life among his kin. After the heroic struggle for independence in '48 he fled to the United States, became a naturalized citizen, and, after a year or so, went back to Paris to meet and marry the lady who had been betrothed to him before the revolution broke out. On his return to America he was unable to resist long the fascinations of the adventurous life in the great West, and for a time he followed the fortunes of General Fremont and other explorers of the wild regions. When the rebellion offered a still more tempting field for his restless ambition, he joined a New Jersey regiment, and served with distinction as its colonel until he was disabled in the field and incapacitated for active life in the future. Shortly after the close of the war he returned to Hungary with his family, and for a quarter of a century has kept his memory bright, his gratitude warm, and his loyalty to his adopted country still as pure as when he won the silver eagle on his shoulders in the trying days of '61. His children and grandchildren regard America with such reverence, and speak of it with such genuine affection, that our poor patriotism was put quite to the blush. With tears in his eyes, the noble old soldier modestly gave us a short history of his life there, and lived over again for a brief moment the scenes of his younger days, his blood still boiling at the memory of the martyrs of Arad, his voice still keeping its martial ring as he spoke of his comrades in the great rebellion in his adopted land. There are few countries where the utterance of such intense sentiments would not sound strained and dramatic, and the expression of such feeling appear a little out of tune. But in Hungary

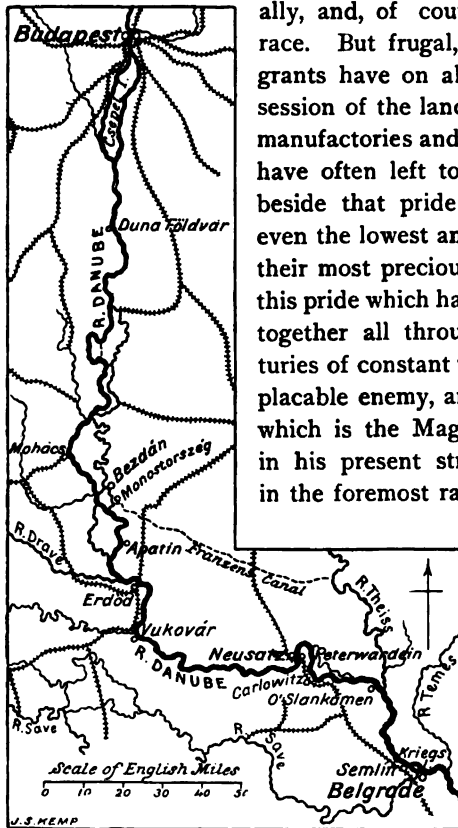
patriotism is not considered old-fashioned, nor do the dictates of society demand that studied indifference and coolness which is characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon. Our visit to the grand old patriot left an impression on us which neither time nor distance can efface.

CHAPTER XI



FEW miles below Mohács is the upper mouth of the Franzens Canal which joins the Danube with the Theiss, giving an easy outlet for the produce of the great fertile plain, facilitating the transportation of grain and lumber from the interior to the chief water highway. The construction of the canal dates from the last century, and, in all probability, it was projected even as early as the Roman occupation. It is only within a few years, however, that, by the aid of English capital, it has been finished and put in active operation. The wonderfully rich farming country through which it passes has attracted, since earliest times, settlers from all surrounding regions, and of all the Hungarian kingdom it has the most varied and heterogeneous population. Almost anywhere within the narrow limits of the low horizon may be counted between the Danube and the Theiss a dozen villages, sheltering representatives of as many different races, and a more attractive field for the philologist or for the artist cannot be found between the Black Sea and the Baltic. The traveller who rushes down the Danube in a steamer, or yawns at the monotonous plain from the window of a Pullman-car on the Orient Express, gets no more idea of the people than if he saw them from a balloon. Even studied intimately and at leisure, this unique mixture of races is confusing and perplexing, and only those who have long been familiar with them can thoroughly under-

stand the conditions of their existence. In all Hungary the Magyar, or pure Hungarian, does not number over four out of the fifteen millions of inhabitants. They are the dominant race intellectually and physically, and, of course, the governing race. But frugal, industrious immigrants have on all sides taken possession of the land, have established manufactories and built up trade, and have often left to the Magyar little beside that pride of race to which even the lowest among them cling as their most precious birthright. It is this pride which has bound the nation together all through the dark centuries of constant warfare with an implacable enemy, and it is this pride which is the Magyar's best support in his present struggle for a place in the foremost rank of civilized nations.



FROM BUDAPEST TO BELGRADE

There can be no question of his intellectual superiority over the races who crowd him on the east, the south, and the west. That he is not yet in the same plane of civilization as the nations in the west of Europe is due to the fact that while the west was civilizing, the Magyar was keeping the

frontier against advancing Mahometanism; and it is only now, after many centuries of discouragement and oppression, that he is in a position to advance along the road of peaceful development and culture. To such a nature as his all is possible, and his marvellous progress during the past twenty years is gratifying proof that he is making the best of his present possibilities.

We had the great good-fortune to be personally conducted through this interesting region by Mr. Louis Gerster, the vice-consul of the United States at Budapest, who met us at the mouth of the canal and who, from long acquaintance with the population, was able to steer our course successfully among the manifold ethnological and philological shoals on which we should certainly have been wrecked had we been travelling alone. He placed a small propeller at our disposal, and we made the journey as far as the Theiss, shooting the wild-fowl with which this region abounds, visiting all the villages, and studying the natives, their customs, costumes, and modes of life. The few days we spent in his company along the Franzens Canal would make a volume in itself, and it is only because we must not pause in the tale of our Danube voyage that we are obliged to keep the log-book of this side trip closed. Russians, Bulgarians, Saxons, Servians, Jews, Gypsies, Schokacz, Bunyvacz, and other known and unknown races and tribes, each with distinctly different dress, language, and customs practically unchanged by transplantation into Hungarian soil, so bewitched us with the charms of constant variety and novelty that our trip was one round of exhilarating and delightful impressions. Thanks to the excellent management of our friend, we were able to spend a Saturday afternoon and part of Sunday in the Schokacz village of Monostorzég, situated on the banks of the Danube, but so hidden away behind islands that it would not have attracted our attention from the canoes, and even if we had seen it, we would



SCHOKACZ TYPES

not have suspected the existence of the treasures it held for us. The village itself is not unlike many others we visited, with broad streets shaded by acacias and mulberries, low whitewashed houses, a large barren church edifice, and a few unobtrusive shops. In the daytime, particularly in the harvest season, the whole place is deserted except by a few old people and children. With the peep of day the entire adult population rattles away over the plain in springless wicker wagons to the cornfields, often miles distant. As the sun gets low in the afternoon the dusty streets are again lively with laden carts and wagons full of chattering, singing girls as brown as Indians. The village swineherd, who has watched his unsavory flock on the muddy shores of the Danube through the heat of the day, now drives them to the village again, and as they approach their homes they scamper away,

each to his own sty, adding the harsh notes of shrill squeals and grunts to the chorus of general congratulation that the hot day is past and the coolness of the night is at hand.

Like three Tartarins of Tarascon, we found everything at Monostorszég arranged for our amusement and entertainment as if by a stock company. In the court-yard of one of the well-to-do farmers' houses, where we stopped to examine the stock of home-made embroideries and fabrics for which the housewife was justly renowned in the neighborhood, we soon saw assemble quite a large party of youths and maidens, many of them in holiday dress, and all ready for a dance. From somewhere, we never knew how or whence, a group of strange-looking musicians and stranger instruments appeared casually in the crowd, and the inspiriting tinkle of native dances set every bare foot patting time on the smoothly trampled earth. There were a bass-viol, a guitar, a medium-sized mandolin, and one, the tamboura, no larger than a lady's hand, all of them strung with wire, and played with a bit of bone or horn. On the last-named instrument, which had a neck out of all reasonable proportion in length, a tall, brawny native picked the most intricate and encouraging melodies, and the feet must indeed have been heavy which did not rise to the rhythm of this music. Out of deference to the visitors the csárdás was for some time the only dance, but as the excitement increased, and the presence of strangers was forgotten, their own dance, the kollo, took its place, and we all participated in this, with more zeal than skill. The kollo, which is the common dance all through Croatia, Slavonia, and Servia, is more solemn and stately than either the Hungarian csárdás or the Roumanian hora, but, like these, comes to an end only with the strength and endurance of the participants. A ring is formed, usually of an equal number of dancers of both sexes. Each maiden places her hands on the shoulder of a youth on either side of

her, giving both the strings of her girdle or the ends of a kerchief, passed behind her back, to twist around their forefingers, thus binding the circle firmly together. The dance consists in stepping one measure by a rhythmic patter with the feet, and then the next measure by a movement to the left, with now and then a few steps backward and forward, as the caprice of any part of the circle may decide. In this dance, as in the *csárdás*, the performers are swayed and directed by the leader of the orchestra, who alternates a slow, almost mournful, strain, with wild and passionate bursts of music, which, like shocks of electricity, set every figure in spirited action.

The ordinary costume of both sexes at *Monostorszég* is simplicity itself. The women wear a high-necked, ankle-long chemise of white homespun linen, with full sleeves gathered at the elbow and richly embroidered, usually with blue. Bands of narrow embroidery decorate the waist and the skirt also. This chemise is girded to the body by a thick woollen belt, binding tightly to the figure the upper edge of a narrow apron of striped woollen homespun, very brilliant in color. A kerchief is usually worn on the head, and the feet are habitually bare. On Sundays and *fête*-days the girls exchange the coarse garments for others of choicer texture, the chemise being fine and carefully plaited, and the apron of mull or muslin delicately embroidered with white. Tall red morocco boots, with yellow heels and soles and curious pointed toes, adorn, or rather disfigure, the feet, and around the neck are hung many rows of gaudy glass beads. The hair is elaborately braided in a broad band, which is brought over to the forehead and then turned back again. This is held in place by dozens of pins with ornamental heads; and all along the edges of the braid behind is a thick row of bits of a fine green aromatic herb, while in the hair itself at the back, as well as around the face, bright-

colored geraniums, marigolds, and other flowers, are skilfully arranged. On their wedding-day they cover their heads with a wonderful square structure, more like a pastry-cook's *pièce montée* than a bonnet, wear an ample white lace shoulder-cape, a brilliant scarlet petticoat, with white lace apron and tall red boots. This dress is preserved with jealous care, and is never produced except on Sundays and holidays. The men's costume consists of loose linen trousers, like a divided skirt, a full tunic, a waistcoat with silver buttons, hussar boots, and a small round hat. Both sexes have for an outer garment either a sheepskin cloak or a great-coat of very thick, felt-like, white woollen, with broad, square



IN SUNDAY DRESS, MONOSTORSZÉG

collar, and sleeves either sewed up at the bottom, or else in short, rudimentary form. These coats, and also the sheep-skin cloaks, are often richly and gaudily embroidered.

When we came into the village bright and early Sunday morning everybody was in holiday dress. The red petticoats of the matrons flashed along the sidewalks, but half-shaded by the small trees ; groups of gay maidens, each with wild-flowers in hand, hurried along to church, where companies of men in immaculate linen and stiff embroidered coats stood in solemn rows like supernumeraries on a stage. The church was already partly full when we entered, and there was a bustle of many people settling themselves in their places, and a constant stream of worshippers coming in at different doors. We sat there marvelling at the strange dresses, enchanted by the brilliant colors, all the while unable to realize that this was the customary weekly ceremony, not a dramatic pageant arranged for our benefit. The sexes sat apart, and the married and the single each had a portion of the pews reserved for them, and each entered the church by a different door. Near the altar the marriageable maidens came clumping in with their red boots, always in parties of three or more, each with a little bright-colored rug, a prayer-book, and a bunch of flowers. Spreading out their rugs on the stone floor, they kneeled down in rows facing the altar, and, after carefully arranging their plaited Sunday chemises so as to cover their feet, remained a few moments in the attitude of prayer, and then rose and took their seats. Of all that great congregation there was not one who did not wear the costume, and, with the exception of some of the ornaments and finer textiles, all the articles of dress were of home production. Every thread of the linen and wool had been spun on the busy distaff as the women went to and from the fields to their work, and woven in the winter-time, when the clatter of the loom is heard in every house.



HUNGARIAN GIRLS AT BEZDÁN

During the sermon we hurried away to be present at the close of the church-service in the neighboring village of Bezdán, inhabited by Magyars. It was a few miles away, and we arrived only in time to see the quiet streets enlivened with people totally different in type and dress from those we had just left. In the flickering shadow of the trees, under the noonday sun, the women strode off homeward with an

energy of action that made their stiff petticoats balloon out still more. Near the church the men gathered in silence to listen to the crier, who was announcing various articles for sale. The unmarried girls of the village wear white linen dresses, with short sleeves and embroidered waists, wreaths of flowers in their hair, bright red ribbons down their backs, black stockings, and dainty red and yellow slippers. The matrons wear colors, sometimes green or black, but usually red, and the men are chiefly noticeable for their loose linen garments and elaborate boots, often with a survival of the spur in the shape of a brass ornament on the side of the heel. Even as we stood watching the people the streets became quite deserted again ; and so we hastened on to another village, where, in the populous Servian quarter, we caught our first glimpses of Oriental life in the groups of women sitting flat in the road in the shadow of the houses, disdaining, like true Orientals, all such luxuries as chairs



BRDÖD

and tables, and disturbed by no horror of dirt. Our Sunday's excursion also included a gypsy settlement—not a common sight, for these people are seldom permitted to occupy houses. It disagreeably contrasted in its squalor

and filth with the perfection of neatness and tidiness among the Schokaczs and Magyars, but gave us a notion of the range of types easily studied in this one neighborhood.

When we left the mouth of the canal, one breezy morning after our excursion, and shot down the turbid stream with all sail set, the soothing regularity of the tree-covered banks, and the utter absence of anything to study or to sketch, was not without a calming influence on us, and but for this little respite we probably should not have had the heart to land at the long straggling village of Apatin, which promised new beauties and fresh interests. Almost the first person we saw was a little old German woman spinning flax on a tiny wheel, looking exactly as if she had been transported bodily from the Black Forest. Farther along the street we met unmistakable Germans, and heard again the familiar language of the upper river. At the nearest corner was a brewery, with tables under the trees, and guzzling sluggards devouring strong sausage and stronger cheese. Everything was of the most commonplace German order, from the architecture of the houses to the beer mugs. Our parachute had burst, and we came to earth with a heavy thump.

About half-way between Apatin and the village of Erdöd, with course as straight as a canal, the river Drave pours in a muddy flood, and far up the shining stream the foot-hills of the Tyrolean Alps lie all faint in the distance. Fertile hills now skirt the west bank, and their sunny yellow slopes looked agreeably bright and warm after the heavy greens of the forest and swamp. The river has washed away the hills into perpendicular bluffs, which are of earth almost as hard as sandstone. Rude steps cut along a cleft were lively with girls carrying jars of Danube water to the village above; and once, under a vineyard, where the vines trail over the very edge of the bank, we saw a rude cave dug in the earth, where a long pole with a dangling bush projecting far be-



CURRENT MILLS

yond the rough bough shelter at the door of the cellar announced to the river men that wine was for sale. Our old friends the current mills still clustered at frequent intervals, where the stream ran the swiftest. Since the first time we saw them—far up the river, above Vienna—they had not changed their general shape or construction; but the owners' names, painted in large white letters on the sides, had marked with accuracy the limits of the different nationalities we had passed in our journey. Now, before the curious combinations of letters on the mills near the Hungarian shore had ceased to puzzle us, Croatian and Slavonian names in a new and unfamiliar alphabet stared at us from the weather-stained sides of the mills along the opposite

bank, and something of the crudity of Oriental taste was seen in the unskilful attempts to decorate the wood-work near the door and window. From the right bank we heard hails in an unknown language, and by the water's edge saw peasants with fiercer mustaches than even the Magyar boasts, and women of a heavy, unsympathetic type. The costume, too, had undergone a decided change. Both men and women wore clumsy wrappings around the ankles, and uncouth sandals and shoes. The loose trousers of the men were strapped to the calf by the thongs which bound the thick woollen cloths or coarse socks to the ankles, and red sashes took the place of belts. Serbia was beginning to show herself to us long before we reached the political frontier.

CHAPTER XII

WE had crossed the line of active melon consumption soon after leaving Budapest; we had for days revelled in a superabundance of them, and, indeed, had quite become accustomed to the sight of every human being, old and young, either carrying a melon or preoccupied with eating it. We had contributed our generous share to the flotsam of melon rinds which bobbed down the current, and had sampled every unfamiliar variety of the delicious fruit which had met our notice. It was chiefly, then, from the unæsthetic motives of appetite that we proposed to land at Vukovár, which had long been held up to us by melon-eaters as the one place on the Danube where the fruit was found in perfection. As we came near the town, remarkable mainly for a new synagogue of doubtful taste, we saw piles of huge round objects ranged along in the shade of small trees on the bank, like cannon-balls in an arsenal, and we needed no further identification of this metropolis of the melon trade. Our approach seemed to cause an unusual commotion at the landing, and we naturally attributed this to the activity among the merchants, induced by the arrival of possible purchasers of the abundant stock in hand. But we learned from a German-speaking policeman who met us as we went ashore that the market-women had taken our fleet for the torpedo-boats of which they had heard, and were in a great fright, believing we were about to attack the place. We

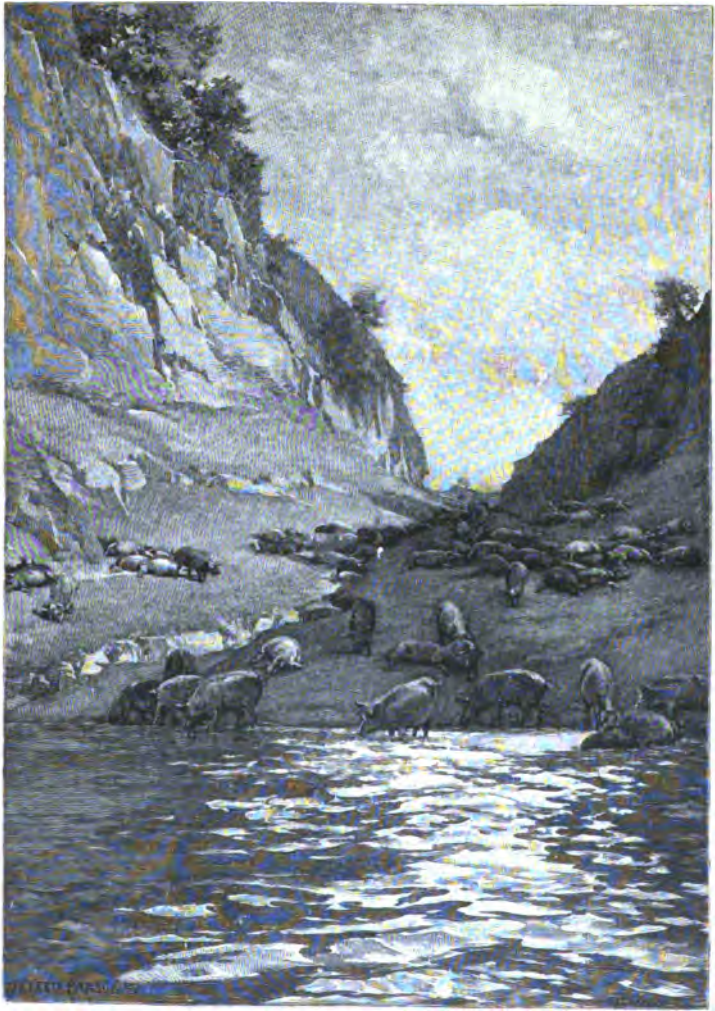
begged him to assure them that we had no use for the town, but only for some of the projectiles we saw piled up there under the trees, and feminine terrors were slowly forgotten in the excitement of trade. Whoever has seen the Southern negro busy with a watermelon may be able to imagine our satisfaction at the quality of the fruit we found, and any one familiar with the capacity of a canoe may appreciate the size of the melons from the fact that we were unable to take in the monsters. But Vukovár is not all watermelons and timid market-women, as we found when we strolled up into the town, puzzled over the signs in the Cyrillic alphabet, and marvelled at the embroidered garments festooned at the shop doors, at the pretentious cafés, and the Franco-Italian architecture—the most imposing we had seen since leaving Budapest.

The heat was intense and the streets almost deserted as we paddled away directly after mid-day, and floated down past great bluffs, with hot gullies filled with herds of swine seeking to avoid the heat by frequent baths, and scarcely distinguishable in color from the baked mud on which they slept. Late in the day, having joined company with some lumber rafts we had been passing and repassing for the last day or two, we drew up the canoes on a pleasant park-like meadow, only a foot or two above the water, with great trees and firmer turf than we had seen for a long time. The rafts tied up to the shore just above us, and the smoke of our several camp-fires soon curled up among the trees, and floated away in the clear air of the perfect summer evening. Our first visitor was a Croatian, who, having served in the Austrian army, had learned a little German, and was only too anxious to air his knowledge. He prepared us for the visit of a band of gypsies who were camping in the vicinity, cautioned us to watch all our loose articles, and loudly sang the praises of one of the gypsy women but lately married,

who, he declared, was as beautiful as a queen—probably meaning the Queen of Servia. To be sure, the next morning, shortly after dawn, a motley crowd straggled up to our encampment, among them the gypsy belle, with the bearing



VUKOVAR WATERMELONS



A FIG-WALLOW

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and gait of a duchess. Tobacco stood in the place of a formal introduction, and even the conscious beauty asked for a cigarette, and puffed away like a veteran smoker. The keen-eyed old rascal who, by virtue of advanced age or superior cunning, was recognized as the chief of the party, took the liveliest interest in our attempts to sketch the beauty, and when the sketch was done, calmly proposed to give us the model to carry away with us. As the offer was made in Roumanian, a language not then familiar to our ears, we did not at first comprehend the generous nature of the gift.

“Take her with you,” he said. “You’ll go, won’t you?”

“Indeed I will,” replied the dusky beauty, “if they’ll take me to Bucharest.”

“But if she goes away with us it will make a scandal, and the husband will have something to say about it,” we timidly suggested.

“Not at all,” insisted the old heathen; “he’s away now, and if he finds her gone when he comes back, he’ll easily get another wife.”

This morality of the Red Indian order so astonished us that we did not readily offer the excuse that our boats could carry but one person apiece, but we sweetened our refusal of the gift by an abundance of tobacco and a few old clothes, hastily launched our canoes, and retreated down the river.

The railway from Budapest to Belgrade crosses the Danube at Peterwardein, little less than a day’s paddle from Vukovár, and the iron bridge is the last one of the ugly series that disfigures the river at intervals from its source. Peterwardein, the Gibraltar of the Danube, is a great fortress, elaborately intricate in construction, towering high above the stream, and overlooking the modern town of Neusatz opposite, at the mouth of a branch of the Franzens Canal. A bridge of boats connects the fortress with the

town a short distance below the railway, and is actually the last bridge over the Danube. The commercial life of the river seemed to revive again at the mouth of the canal, and as we sailed past the vine-covered hills of Carlowitz and the town of that name, our old enemies the freight steamers puffed up-stream, leaving a dangerous wake, and fouling the sweet air with noisome smoke.

On the perfect summer morning when we left our lovely camping-ground on a meadow below Carlowitz, and drifted down into the silvery light of morning which glorified the river, the hills, and the distant landscape, we were in the mood to enjoy exactly what the Danube offered for our entertainment. On one bank peasants gathered in large parties at every convenient spot, and were engaged in various domestic operations, quite as frank and unconscious in their actions as if they were in the shelter of their own homes. From the villages at some distance back from the river whole families migrate at frequent intervals to temporary camps by the water's edge, bringing with them their live-stock, cart-loads of corn, and their accumulated washing. While the women are busy with soap and mallet, the men winnow grain, and carry it to the current mills to be ground, and the children watch the pigs and fowls, who are enjoying in their way this brief outing. On the opposite shore may sometimes be seen, on a level piece of public land, great collections of ricks of all sizes and shapes, when the neighboring farmers assemble to thresh their harvest in common, each according to his own means and methods. Some beat it out with flails and pitchforks, others drive horses around on it, and a few make use of the improved machinery of English manufacture. Here it is readily loaded on lighters, to be towed up to Budapest or Vienna, or perhaps to be floated down-stream to the English steamers on the Black Sea. From one group to another, from one shore to the

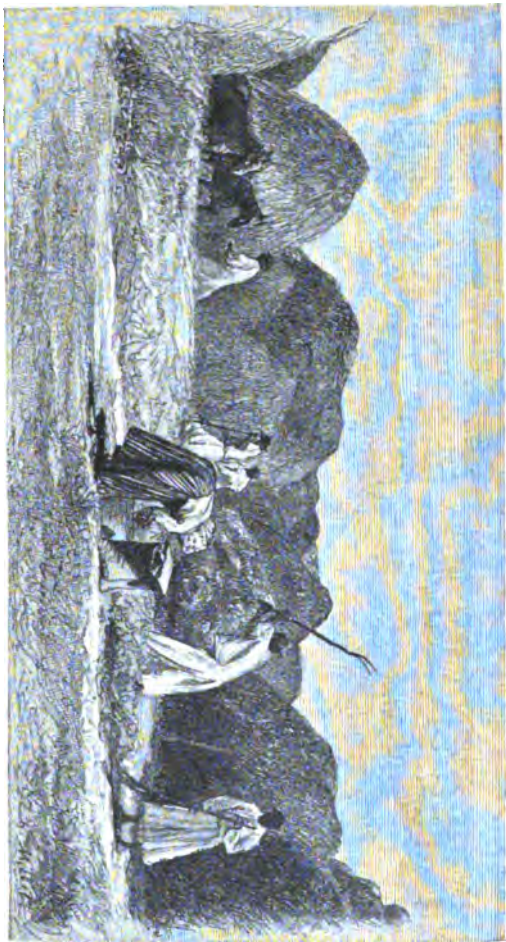


A GYPSY GIRL

other, we went as slowly as the resistless current would let us, fascinated by the cheerful busy life, and always finding each new scene more attractive than the last. Here the Servian women were beating their coarse garments, and

hanging them untidily to dry on the framework of the carts. A few rods lower down, at a bivouac of Saxons, piles of beautiful white linen and the freshest of blue garments contrasted agreeably with the squalor of the neighboring camp. These peasants we found polite but reserved; the Servians were usually noisy and talkative, and the Magyars cheery, sympathetic, and communicative.

Far down the glassy reach beyond Ó Szlankamen to the east a long range of flat hills now appeared, marking the course of the sluggish Theiss, and on the opposite bank we saw great rocks, scarcely distinguishable from the hard mud bluffs, but marking a distinct geological change in the landscape. Here on the scorched hill-sides frequent villages were baking in the hot sun, and copper-covered monstrosities of church-spires flashed and glistened in the brilliant light. A ruined castle towered high above the river where the hills crowd the stream out of its course, and then the river broadened into a lake-like expanse, and stretched away until the left bank, always flat and without a break, lost itself entirely in the distance, and sky and water seemed to meet as at the sea horizon. Far away to the south bold blue peaks, the sentinels of the northern range of mountainous Servia, showed where Belgrade stands; and, in pleasant perspective, high bluffs on the right bank, with here and there a church-spire, were reflected with all the glories of the midsummer sky in the perfect mirror of the majestic stream. A wonderful sunset glow colored all the landscape as we encamped under a high bluff, in full sight of Semlin and the Servian capital beyond. We fancied we could see in the glowing distance slender minarets behind the great fortress which guards the frontier, and in the perfect quiet of the lingering twilight imagined we could hear the hum of the busy towns. The song of the shepherd on the opposite meadows echoed sweetly as we lay by the camp-fire that



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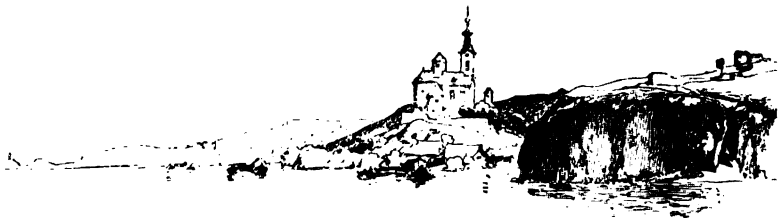
A CROATIAN BIVOUAC

beautiful evening and enjoyed for the first time in our wanderings an hour or two of delightful leisure in the open air.

It was now nearly eight weeks since we launched our fleet in the head-waters of the Danube, and, with the exception of a few days spent at Vienna, Hainburg, Budapest, and on the Franzens Canal, we had passed the greater part of our time, day and night, in the canoes. On the upper river, where we cooked over spirit-lamps because we were never able to have a fire, we had no great inducement to sit up after dark, and consequently sought our snug beds in the canoes very soon after dinner. After we reached Hungary, however, we found it not only practicable but more convenient to use wood for cooking, and from the frontier downward we always had the proper and agreeable accompaniment of every comfortable bivouac—a cheerful fire. But it

also happened that all through Hungary we found so much to interest us we could never manage to stop for the night before dark ; and since it always took us two hours or more to make camp, cook and eat our dinner, and tidy up afterwards, we were obliged to continue our custom of turning in (literally) as soon as possible, in order to be able to rise at daybreak. The evening we camped in sight of Belgrade, the dewless, balmy air of the river so soothed our nerves, and the glowing landscape was such a pleasure to our eyes, that we lay in the firelight and, regardless of the morrow, watched for a long time the glittering constellations as they slowly came in sight ; and when at last we slept, we dreamed of Turks and sieges and the turmoil of belligerent races, whose territory now lay within reach of a few paddle strokes.

The happy chant of Servian girls marching down the steep paths in the bluffs, laden with jugs for Danube water, was our accompaniment as we paddled along in the early morning towards the steamer-landing at Semlin, the last Hungarian town on the right bank of the Danube, a busy little commercial place with all the fascinating characteristics of a frontier town. A populous market-place, numerous cafés of the Turkish order—the first we had seen—and a population largely Servian, with more barbaric types, and wearing costumes plainly transitional between the Hungarian and the



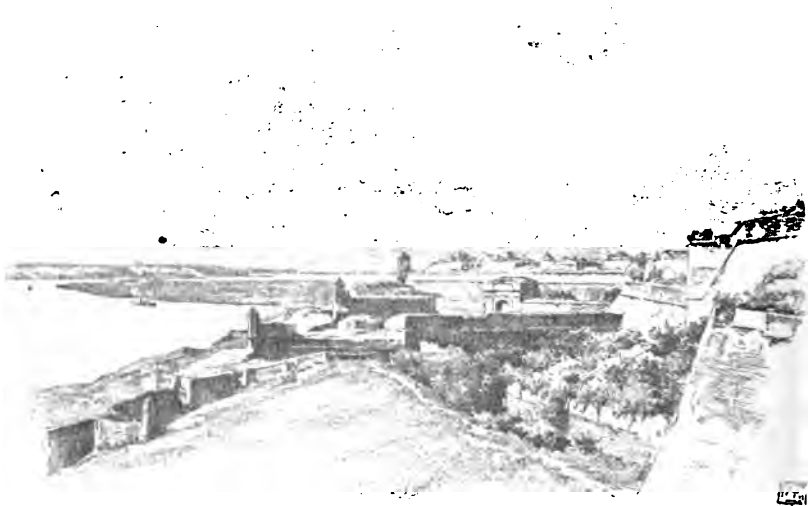


SERBIAN WOMEN

Turkish, kept us interested longer than we anticipated, and well repaid the delay.

From Semlin to Belgrade is but a half-hour's paddle down a bend behind the Krieg's Insel and across the clear, green stream of the Save. Above the great fortress which occupies the whole area of a high promontory at the junc-

tion of the rivers, where a church and other edifices are half hidden among bastions and parapets, an immense cream-colored Government building extends an imposing mass, and, as seen from the river, divides the town into two parts. To the left is the old Turkish quarter on the Danube, in recent years almost depopulated of Mahometans, and with only one insignificant mosque still preserved ; and to the right, Belgrade proper, along the Save and the heights which extend back into the country. Lumberyards and the usual motley collection of buildings hid the town from us as we slowly paddled up the sluggish current of the Save to a great bathing establishment, all gay with flowers, where a large contingent of the youthful population of the city were disporting themselves, naked, in canoes of simple construction and gaudy color. Our arrival caused very little flutter on the shore. We saw one fez on a small boy, and fancied that on landing we should find everything



FORTRESS AT THE JUNCTION OF THE DANUBE AND THE SAVE—BELGRADE

suggesting the East, and fierce officials haughtily demanding our passports. But we moored our canoes alongside the bath-house and went ashore without a question, found everybody in European dress, and met a polite soldier-policeman who volunteered to look out for our craft, and immediately busied himself with boxing the ears of the inquisitive youngsters who ventured too near the dainty vessels. We were not long, however, in finding novelties of dress and architecture, for at a short distance from our landing-place we entered the outskirts of the city, and passed through a street quite as Eastern in aspect as any in the heart of Stamboul. Wretched wooden hovels with shattered tiles and crumbling plaster; dingy low cafés with pallid Turks inhaling with indolent sighs the stupefying smoke of nargiléhs; open air cooking-places where unsavory messes sizzled on gridirons; and general squalor, mustiness, and filth everywhere. From this quarter, steep, ill-paved streets mount to the higher part of the town, where the hotels, theatres, and palaces are, and pleasant avenues lead out to the luxurious residential suburb on the heights beyond. But all Belgrade, at the date of our visit, was much like the normal condition of Broadway, and New York in general. The streets were everywhere torn up for water-pipes and sewers, sidewalks were being widened and levelled, and there was every indication of a serious attempt to improve the city, or some job in the control of the City Fathers. The heat was intense and almost unbearable as we explored the streets and park and wandered through the fortress. When the sun reached the zenith, all Belgrade was as quiet as Pompeii, for the inhabitants withdrew in-doors, and left the streets void of life and movement. Even the hissing of frying fat in the numerous cook-shops seemed hushed for the time; the vender of kukurutz (green corn on the ear) slept in a shadow; and

the Bulgarian bozaji, selling slightly fermented maize beer, alone broke the drowsy silence with his mournful cries. There was absolutely nothing to see, and therefore we also sought shelter, and sleepily waited for the town to come to



BULGARIAN BOZAJI, BKLGRADE

life again. In the middle of the afternoon a few hurrying peasant women, their brilliant dresses quite out of harmony with the commonplace aspect of the streets, flashed along in the sunshine; one or two men with effeminate lace-trimmed tunics, plaited like imitations of the Albanian fustinella, strode proudly past, unconscious that hats of London make and elastic-sided boots made them look extremely ridiculous; and so the streets gradually resumed their normal activity as the afternoon coolness came on.

We soon yielded to the tempting invitation of a fresh breeze and sailed away into the Danube again, escorted by a fleet of Servian canoes with naked crews.

We began to think that in crossing the frontier we had passed the limit beyond which the modern invention of modesty has not yet been universally accepted. It certainly seemed so, for the bronzed figures of the naked youths excited no comment on the shore as we passed. Rounding the water-battery and drifting along the old Turkish quarter, we came to a large pleasant meadow, glowing in the rich light of the afternoon sun. Here scores of men, as unclothed as the horses they bestrode, were riding their animals out into the shallows, bathing with them in the yellow stream. Like so many figures from the frieze of the Parthenon, they sat their horses with perfect grace, saddleless and bridless, and now dashed along, throwing up clouds of spray, and again disappeared in a golden cloud of dust on the meadow. A party of young men and boys, equally in Spartan attire, were having an exciting foot-race along the level turf, and this little spot was for the time a sculptors' paradise. We drifted slowly along, watching the athletic figures in the wonderful light, all unconscious in our preoccupation that the current was carrying us into a scene of still more surprising simplicity and innocence. Our canoes, if left to themselves, would always turn round and float down-stream stern foremost; and that afternoon, as on many other occasions, we found the trick to be of advantage, for we could no longer watch the unusual spectacle on the meadow. When we could see no more in the direction of the dazzling sun, we paddled the canoes around, and found ourselves, to our surprise, quite near a number of Servian families, who were taking a refreshing bath—old and young, men, women, and children—in the sandy shallows. No bath-house had given them refuge on the bank,

nor had they considered it necessary to disfigure themselves with drapery, except a few of the women, who wore an apology for an apron tied around the waist.

It was a sudden change from the contemplation of figures of classical grace to the unwitting interruption of the bath of a dozen unlovely families, and it was a parallel plunge from the accustomed luxuries of pleasant camp grounds above Belgrade to the mud flats on the river-side below. We had drifted along the meadow so slowly that



FOUNTAIN IN THE SQUARE, BELGRADE

we found the daylight already waning and a threatening storm close at hand before we thought of camping. Then we hastened to the first spot where there was a possible landing. Here we slept until the ring of scythes at the

very bows of our canoes brought us to consciousness again, and we opened the tents to see a sunny meadow among the trees, all dotted over with the white figures of peasants slashing at the ranks of coarse grass that fringed the sun-baked shore.

CHAPTER XIII



FROM the heights of Belgrade we had seen the blue summits of mountains far away to the south—the outlying spurs of the great Carpathian range—and having threaded a tortuous way through the great Hungarian plain, we now looked forward with exhilaration to the rugged scenery we were soon to enjoy, and were eager to welcome a change in the horizon. We saw on the map no town of importance between the Servian frontier and Orsova, at the Iron Gates; and since we were not unwilling to have a little quiet after so many days of excitement among novelties of type and costume, we noticed with satisfaction as we went along that the flat shore on the Hungarian side and the low hills opposite offered us no temptation to land. To be sure, we were still in some doubt as to our probable reception in a Servian village, for Belgrade was the only Servian place we had visited, and we could not judge from our experience at the capital what might happen if we went ashore in a remote town. We had heard many tales of the difficulties of travelling in the remote districts of Servia, and had provided ourselves with passports properly viséd in many languages. As we had no occasion to show them in Belgrade, we now began to have some curiosity about their usefulness, and we contemplated going ashore at a Servian village for no better reason than to test this question. But, before we found an attractive landing-place, we saw far below us in the distance,



ALFRED PARSONS

SEMENDRIA

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about noon on the day after leaving the frontier, what appeared to be a curious row of buildings on the low Servian shore, stretching out into the river like piers of a great railway bridge, or a line of grain elevators.

At first we thought it was mirage, which had hitherto often deceived us by its distortion of forms and exaggeration of heights, but as we paddled on against the wind we soon saw it was a collection of solid architectural forms. It was, however, only when we were within a mile or so of the town that we recognized in what we had taken to be a modern landmark the huge towers and walls of the great mediæval citadel of Semendria (Smédérévo, in Servian), rising in all their ancient dignity from the very waters of the Danube, and overtopping with their masses of solid masonry the little town modestly nestling in the shadow of the great fortress. Of recent years Semendria has become of commercial importance as a shipping port for grain, and when we entered the town its narrow streets were blocked by hundreds of laden ox-carts, all patiently waiting their turn at the public scales, where the weight of the grain is guaranteed by the town officers before it is delivered to the lighters. Through a motley crowd of Servians in barbaric fur caps, red sashes, rawhide sandals, and the coarsest of homespun garments, we made our way to the fortress. The great walls enclose a triangular space of ten or twelve acres, occupying the whole of a low point between the River Jessava and the Danube. The apex of the triangle at the junction of the rivers is a citadel of great strength, built in 1432 by the despot George Brankovitch. It is still in wonderful preservation. Indeed, the walls of the whole enclosure and the twenty-three great square towers show remarkably few signs of decay, and, with the exception of the destruction of the wooden platforms, are almost as sound as the day they were built. Here and there an inscription, or a fragment of a statue built into

the walls, proves that the importance of the town dates as far back as the Roman occupation, when this was undoubtedly one of a series of strongholds along the river.

The barracks of the Servian garrison which stand in the great enclosure appear like huts in comparison with the immense towers and high walls of the mediæval structure, and a regiment of infantry may be quite lost sight of among the tangled bushes and the thick foliage of the trees which cover a large part of the ground. From the top of one of the great towers we saw below and before us a panorama of varied beauty, extending from the heights of Belgrade to the Carpathian range, faintly shadowed in the distance beyond the glittering expanse of the Danube, which spreads out into great broad reaches, with numerous islands, and, like its smaller self among the mountains of Baden, pauses and gathers volume and strength for the dash into the great gorge that cleaves the jagged mass of mountains for fifty miles or more before again resuming its quiet flow.

As we went away from Semendria the chief of police was among the party assembled to see us off, and here, we thought, was the opportunity to see whether our passports would be honored. We offered them to the official, modestly at first, but he would not even look at the envelopes.

"But they are our passports," we urged. "They cost us a lot of money and trouble, and if no official looks at them they will be wasted, for they are only good for one year!"

But he resolutely declined to have anything to do with them, although we increased the urgency of our request almost to the strength of a demand, and we left, quite ready to believe the statement of a scoffing friend in Budapest, who declared that any one could travel the whole length of the Danube with no more of a passport than a restaurant bill of fare, which would satisfy the officials as well as the best parchment with signatures and seals.

At Bazias, on the Hungarian side of the river, the terminus of the railway from Temesvár, and the point where the tourist usually takes a steamer for the trip through the Kasan defile and the Iron Gates, there is nothing on shore more interesting than a railway restaurant; but the landscape is very grand and beautiful. The hills completely mask the course of the river as the traveller approaches them from up-stream, and the fine ruin of Castle Rama, on the Ser-



RAMA

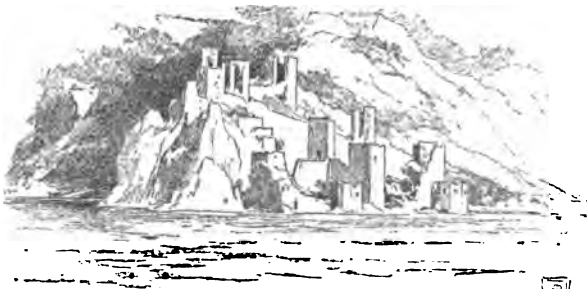
vian side, seems to stand on the shore of a large lake with a southern boundary of great mountains. From Rama the river sweeps majestically around to the south past Bazias, and narrows somewhat as it winds among the first great foot-hills of the mountain range, spreading out again after a few miles into another lake-like reach, which in turn has on its southern horizon an apparently impassable chain of mountains—this time the real Carpathians.

As we crossed the river from Rama towards the cluster of houses on the water's edge at Bazias, we observed that the little village, dwarfed to insignificance by the towering hills above it, was all gay with flags. On closer approach we distinguished near the landing the form of a low gray vessel quite unlike any craft we had hitherto seen. This proved

to be an Austrian gunboat, and the occasion of the display of bunting was the birthday of the Emperor Francis Joseph. As we drifted down towards the man-of-war we hoisted all the flags we had, and, as we were passing in review with all the dignity we could command, we were startled by the loud report of a champagne cork pointed in our direction, and fired, as it were, across our bows. We surrendered at once and unconditionally, and exchanged cards with a group of officers celebrating the Emperor's birthday on the quarter-deck. We found our captivity so little irksome that we willingly prolonged it until we were admonished by the position of the sun in the heavens that we must be off if we would reach the entrance to the Carpathian gorge before dark. Our haste was due to no more cogent reason than ambition to begin the fight with the river at the so-called cataracts. These obstructions had been described to us by friends who had made the journey in a steamer as extremely dangerous, and, as we neared the mountains, all the river-men we talked with warned us of the perils of the stream below, and advised us on no account to attempt the passage of the cataracts without a pilot. But we could not forget the collapse of the Strudel and Wirbel bugbear in the upper river, and could not bring ourselves to apprehend any great danger in rapids where steamers are constantly passing up and down with loaded lighters in tow. Even our new found friends on the gunboat, who had just made the trip, cautioned us not to attempt the passage in our frail canoes, and took great pains to show us the dangerous points on their charts. Of course, the more we heard of these terrors to navigation the more eager we became to look upon them ourselves, and, while we did not propose to spoil our trip by the loss of our canoes, we also did not intend to take anybody's testimony of the dangers, which were, after all, only relative. The last words our naval advisers said to us, as we regretfully

left them, was to be sure to take a pilot at Drenkova, the last steamboat-landing above the rapids.

From the broad reach just below Bazias the whole horizon to the south and east appears to be a solid wall of rocky heights, and is without a break visible to the eye. For about twenty miles the river winds gently across a pleasant valley, divides around a large island, and then sweeps straight down towards the huge barrier, which extends to the right and left as far as the eye can see. As we paddled along in the quiet current past the Servian town of Gradistje, and came nearer and nearer to the mass of rugged peaks which cut sharply against the sky, we grew more and more impatient to discover the course of the river through the chain, and unconsciously increased the rapidity and the force of our stroke until we sped along as if paddling a race. Suddenly, as we were passing the end of the large island, the landscape opened to the eastward like the shifting scenes on a stage, and the river, sweeping past a high isolated rock in mid-stream, was seen to plunge with accelerated speed directly into a narrow cleft between immense limestone cliffs, and to disappear in the depths of the gorge. Guarding the entrance to this defile, the ruin of the Castle of Golubáç, on the Servian shore, piles its towers high on a spur which juts



GOLUBÁÇ

out boldly over the river, and shades a pleasant little green meadow by the water-side. The foundations of the castle are said to be Roman, and there is a tradition that Helen, the Empress of Greece, was imprisoned here ; but the ruins now visible are those of the fortress built by Maria Térésa in the middle of last century. Along the Hungarian bank the famous highway of Count Széchényi, leading from the town of Moldova just above to Orsova, at the Roumanian frontier, shows the straight line of its cuttings and embankments but a few feet above the water. The smooth, perpendicular cliffs are perforated by numerous caverns, one of which tradition has marked as the place whence issue the swarms of vicious flies which persecute the cattle in the summer-time. A local legend attributes the origin of these flies to the body of the dragon killed by St. George.

The green meadow under Golubác invited us to a pleasant camp, for night was fast coming on as we finished our sketching, and we were loath to leave the charming, romantic spot. But one of our party, unable to resist the impulse to penetrate the gathering gloom of the defile, had drifted on and was lost to sight. The whole sky was tinged with the coppery red of sunset when we set out to overtake him. The river whirled and rushed and wrestled with our paddles as we floated on into the deepening twilight. Now and then a great boiling under our very keels would throw us out of our course, and make the light canoes bound along with an unfamiliar and disturbing motion. On and on we went, unable longer to see a map, and with no means of determining where and when we should come upon the dangerous rapids and whirlpools that lay somewhere in our path. Frequent camp-fires sparkled at the water's edge, and from one to another we paddled, wakening the echoes with the shrill notes of our whistles, until at last, just as we had concluded to give up the search, certain that we had passed our compan-

ion in the darkness, we heard his welcome hail, and were soon in camp.

The plaintive song of a peasant girl, spinning from a distaff as she walked through the rustling maize-field behind our camp, brought us to our feet long before we had slept off the effects of our sixty miles' paddle of the day before; and, eager to be at the rapids, we ate a hasty breakfast and were off down the reach, very like the Hudson in scenery, to the little coaling station of Drenkova, where we had been told to take a pilot. We trimmed our canoes with unusual care, tested our paddles, stowed away all loose articles, and put everything in fighting trim. Although we did not propose to undergo the humiliation of following a pilot through the rapids, we thought it best to take all reasonable means to find the best channel, and we therefore landed at Drenkova, and consulted the agent of the steamship company there. He could give us but very few directions which were of any use, but offered us a pilot, and advised us strongly not to attempt the passage alone. But the sight of puffing steamers slowly dragging loaded barges up the stream was to our minds satisfactory proof of the nature of the obstructions, and, a little impatient at the delay, we pushed off, followed by repeated cautions and confused directions. From our long experience with the Danube, we had come to believe that it was a thoroughly well-behaved and well-regulated river, whose mild tricks were easily understood, and whose current would not endanger the veriest tub that ever disgraced a navigable stream. We were only too anxious, then, to see what the river could really do in the way of making navigation difficult and dangerous; and, besides, never having tested our canoes except in the choppy seas of the sudden wind-storms, we were ready to risk a good deal to find out how they would act in the baffling currents and waves of a real rapid.

Just below Drenkova the Danube bends to the south, and makes its first angry dash over the ledges of rock that



ROUMANIAN PEASANT GIRL

stretch between the sheer cliffs on the Servian side and the rocky, wooded heights opposite. The river was about its average height on the day we went down, and no rocks showed above the surface. A strong head-wind so disturbed the water that we were unable to judge of the run of the currents, nor exactly tell where the rapids really were until we were in the midst of them. To add to our difficulties, several steamers were towing up-stream, and the wash from their paddles, necessary to be avoided at all times, increased the turmoil of the rushing waters. There was nothing to do, then, but to take our own course far enough away to avoid the steamer wash, if possible, and still near enough the main channel to escape the whirlpools,

which we had been told were the greatest dangers of the passage. Between this Scylla and Charybdis the way was not easy, but we paddled steadily forward, breasting the

waves, throwing spray mast-high, and plunging along with great speed. Suddenly, between two of the canoes a great vortex appeared, and with giddy revolving motion seemed to rush on viciously in chase of the foremost boat. Never were paddles used with greater vigor or better skill, and the dainty crafts swept gracefully around on the outer ring of the whirlpool, just out of reach of the resistless clutch of the swirl, until the yawning vortex gradually closed up again and its force was idly spent. The Danube had given us a notion of what it might do if trifled with.

A second rapid followed the first, not far below it, at the end of a broad reach surrounded by high mountains, and although we were not conscious of any great increase in the speed of the current, we heard in a few moments the roar of the Greben rapids—the longest and most difficult of navigation above those at the Iron Gates. As we came near, we saw a line of white water reaching across from shore to shore, apparently without a break. We were speedily approaching this rank of tossing waves, where jets of glittering spray flew high in the air, when we fortunately saw a steamer passing up near the Servian shore, and paddled rapidly across to find the channel, where we would be less likely to meet the only enemy we feared—the whirlpools. Before we had time to deliberate on the best passage among the rocks we were in the midst of the tumbling, dashing waters, and almost before we caught our breath again we were in a comparatively still pool under the immense crag of Greben, which, pushing far out into the stream and narrowing the channel, causes the current to flow with great swiftness over the jagged ledges of rock that dam the river at this point. In our exhilarating dashes through the waves we had not shipped a spoonful of water, although our decks had been constantly awash, even to the very top of the coamings. As we neared the last pitch of the river at this

point, we had acquired such confidence in our canoes that we dashed boldly into the roughest of the leaping waves, fired with enthusiasm for the unaccustomed sport, and filled with the excitement of our adventure. The canoes fairly leaped from crest to crest of the billows, and we could not see each other for the screen of dashing spray. A moment or two of active dodging and very hard paddling and we came out breathless at the landing of a temporary station where the international corps of engineers are quartered while the great work of improving the navigation is in progress.

CHAPTER XIV

THE rocky shoulder of Greben is all scarred and torn by the cuttings which are gradually eating off its rugged and dangerous spur. Farther down-stream a breakwater is in course of construction, intended to divert the current from a shallow; and at some distance below, the great black masses of drilling machines, all chains and iron posts and funnels, are seen anchored in mid-stream, where they are constantly at work blasting out a great ledge of rock which causes the rapids of the Jur.

The cheery engineers, who had watched our descent of the rapids with great interest, welcomed us when we landed with offers of substantial hospitality, and over a good dinner we discussed the one topic which had for us a common interest—the moods and caprices of the great river. When we left them, at two o'clock, we had still a paddle of some twenty-five miles before we should reach Orsova, where we proposed to pass the night, not thinking it would be possible to camp in the gorge. There would be no shelter from the violent up-stream wind until we reached the entrance of the defile, so there was need of haste. Below Greben the river sweeps around in a great curve from the south to the north-east, a mile or more in width, then suddenly narrows, and takes a remarkably straight course through a deep cleft in the mountains, until it bends sharply towards the south again at the Iron Gates. The gorge through which it

passes is called the Kasan defile, and is far and away the most impressive and wonderful feature of the scenery along the whole river. Sheer limestone precipices many hundred feet in height rise up in grand simple masses on either side, and as we approached the gorge it looked as if some great convulsion of nature had wrenched the solid rocks asunder, leaving the deep and narrow chasm for the passage of the river. Before Count Széchényi built his road along the Hungarian bank, in 1840, there had been no practicable pathway through the defile since the great road built by Trajan for his soldiers and his army trains during his Dacian campaign. At the entrance, where the river is constricted to a width of only 180 yards, the straight cutting of the modern highway and the great score in the cliffs left by Trajan's road are both prominent features in the landscape. Here the river rushes violently past a high rock in mid-stream, which causes a dangerous whirlpool just below, then plunges into the narrow cleft with a volume of water 200 feet or more in depth, and swirls and boils and throbs with great pulsations all along its swelling flood. Narrower and narrower becomes the gorge, higher and higher the cliffs, and strange currents and ominous whirls break the surface of the dark torrent. In the depths of the chasm there is almost twilight gloom, and in the impressive quiet the murmur of the impatient river sounds dull and low, like the breakers on a far-off sea-shore. Still closer and closer crowd the giant cliffs, until they almost touch. At last they force the mighty river into the narrow compass of 120 yards; and then, as if fatigued with the effort of strangling the resistless flood, withdraw again, and little by little the current gains its familiar breadth, and spreads out into a pleasant reach with high wooded hills, enclosing on the north a fertile valley with ripening cornfields, and piling high on the south their rugged summits almost perpendic-



THE KASAN DEFILE

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ularly over the water's edge. Here the Roman road is almost practicable in parts, and under a great towering precipice, where a projecting rock pushes out boldly into the deep channel, the great general caused, in the year 103, a tablet to be carved in the solid rock, on which may still be read the inscription :

IMP·CAESAR·DIVI·NERVAE·F·
NERVA·TRAIANVS·AVG·GERM
PONTIF·MAXMVS·TRIBI·OT * *
* * * * * RIAE·CO * * * * *

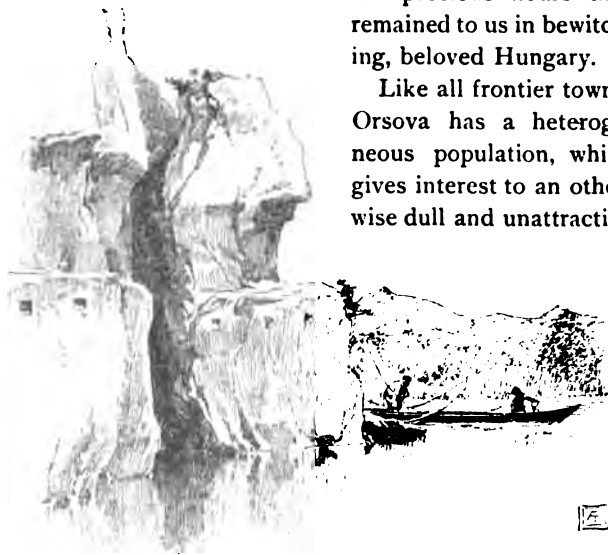
commemorating his victory over nature as well as over man. Nature has not forgiven Trajan the desecration of this, one of her sublimest works, and in the lapse of centuries she has gradually eaten away the hard rock tablet, threatening it with utter destruction, in spite of the projecting stone above it, until solid masonry supports have been erected to hold the shattered inscription in its place. As we were sketching the spot, with its interesting traces of the Roman road showing where the posts were fastened to the rock to support the platforms necessary to widen the path, two natives came paddling up under the edge of the cliff in a dugout canoe, and moored their boat at the corner, where, on the old Roman road-bed, they had a little fishing camp. Canoe, implements, dress, were the same as in the days when their remote ancestors piloted Trajan's galleys through the dangerous eddies of the defile. Dacia Felix is now only a name, and a shattered tablet and crumbling traces of the first great highway along the Danube alone remain to remind us of the great general's conquests of this remote region, and to suggest something of the civilization he founded there. But the peasant is still unchanged in type and costume, speaks a language closely allied to the old

Roman dialect, tills the ground and catches fish with the same rude implements that Trajan found in the hands of the happy barbarians of Dacia Felix.

It was long after dark before we steered our canoes by the twinkling lights of Orsova to the steamboat-landing there. The tinkle of gypsy music in the garden restaurant by the river-bank echoed across the silently-flowing stream, now silvered by the moon, which tardily rose above the great mountains. We heard again the soft accents of the Magyar tongue and the intoxicating strains of the csárdás. The wild gypsy leader poured his music into our eager ears, drawing his nervous bow under our very hat-brims, lest we should lose some quaver of the stirring chords. Long into the night we sat there, captive to the music and the beauty of the moonlit landscape, loath to lose one moment of the

few precious hours that remained to us in bewitching, beloved Hungary.

Like all frontier towns, Orsova has a heterogeneous population, which gives interest to an otherwise dull and unattractive



REMAINS OF TRAJAN'S ROAD NEAR ORSOVA

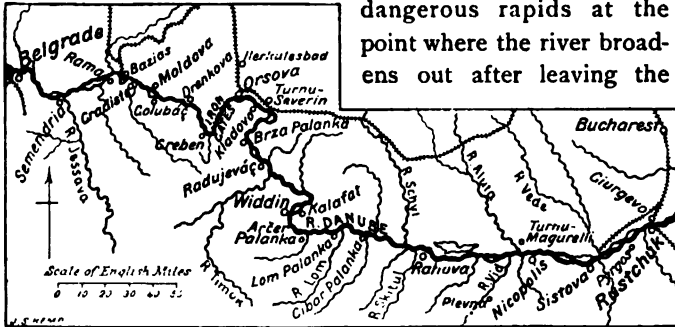
place. Besides its commercial importance on the river, and also on the through railway line from Budapest to Bucharest, it is, in summer-time at least, the halting-place for the great multitudes of Roumanians and Hungarians who resort to the baths of Méhadia, or the Herkulesbad, as it is usually called, from the old Roman name, Thermae Herculis, a most picturesque and luxurious establishment of sulphur baths a few miles inland, in a wonderful gorge of the Carpathians.

Among the motley collection of peasants seen in the streets, the Turk in all his squalor is met here for the first time on the Danube. By the Treaty of Berlin, the small fortified island of Ada Kaleh, three miles below Orsova, was ceded to Austria, and the citadel was ordered to be razed. But as the whole population consisted of Turks, and there seemed to be no humane method of getting rid of them, they were allowed to linger on, not acquiring rights of citizenship in Austria, nor yet responsible to the Sultan in any way, paying no taxes to either Austro-Hungary or Turkey. The wily Turk makes the most of his position, and drives a thriving trade in all sorts of knick-knacks, picks up a good income out of the crowd of tourists who visit the island for a sight of a real Turk in his own home, and sells the best tobacco that can be bought north of the Balkans, and at prices which argue against his assurance that he has paid duty for it at the Austrian customs. Just beyond this island the Danube bends sharply to the south-east, and three or four miles below the Roumanian frontier tumbles its full, broad current over a great ledge of rocks, which for a mile and a half in width extend across the river, and leaving only a narrow and intricate channel for steamers near the Roumanian shore, always dangerous to navigation, and at low-water impassable except by boats of shallow draught. In this mile and a half of rapids the river falls sixteen feet,

and the broad defile at this point is known as the Iron Gates.

The Turks originally applied the name Iron Gates (Demir Kapou) to the rapids just below Drenkova as well as to those near Orsova, calling them respectively Upper and Lower Iron Gates. The name, which signified obstructions to navigation rather than natural gateways in the mountains, is now commonly applied to the lower rapids only, and the traveller who has passed through the Kasan defile usually expects to find a still more wonderful gorge at the Iron Gates below. He is sure to be disappointed, for the Iron

Gates are only a series of dangerous rapids at the point where the river broadens out after leaving the



FROM BELGRADE TO RUSTCHUK

mountains, and the scenery there is, by comparison with that of the Kasan defile, tame and uninteresting. With the Carpathian ends the series of remarkable gorges and defiles which has marked the course of the river at intervals from its source down, for the vast plain of Roumania extends from the foot-hills here to the shores of the Black Sea. The Iron Gates have been since earliest history of great military and political importance, forming as they do a natural barrier on the great water-way between the East and the West. According to Strabo, the Danube ended

here and the Is ̄er began, for the lower river was known to the Greeks as the Ἰστρος. There is no record of any mention of the upper Danube before the first century B.C., when it was discovered by the Roman armies under Cæsar, who probably gave it the name Danubius. Max Müller, in his study of the origin of the name of the Danube, says that the Latin name is probably a translation of the Aryan word *danu*, which, in the védas, means moist, or an adaptation of the old Persian word of the same spelling which means a river. It is scarcely necessary to add that the river has now a different name in several of the countries through which it flows. The Germans call it the Donau, the Hungarians the Duna, the Roumanians the Dunari, and the Servians, Bulgarians, and Russians the Dunai.

The Iron Gates marks in the history of our trip the loss of the Admiral of the fleet who, having exhausted all the time at his disposal, was obliged to leave us here, to the regret of all of us and his own intense disappointment.

The International Corps of Engineers, who are carrying out the improvements of navigation on all the rapids of the Carpathian gorge, have begun to cut a canal through the rocks at the Iron Gates along the Servian bank. The work has been in progress since the autumn of 1890, and will be completed in 1893. Trajan's engineers actually completed part of a similar canal a few rods farther inland, and the material of the ancient embankments is now employed in the construction of the modern dikes. Like the conscientious travellers we were, we inspected the works, and at the invitation of the engineers, spent a pleasant half-day there. In common with so many other undertakings the world over, the labor is mostly in the hands of the Italians, who look exactly like so many workmen on the Croton Aqueduct. At noon they gathered at the doorway of the

ГОСТОИИЦА ХЕВ ЈОПК—GASTHAUS NEWY JORK—quite the same as at the corner groceries of the One-hundred-and-something Street above the Harlem River, and only left the spot during the hour of rest to watch the futile rage of a flock of Servian and Roumanian geese at a sleepy Hungarian eagle chained to a perch—an active symbol of a possible political situation which appealed strongly to the ready Italian wit.

We had our usual enemy, a violent head-wind, on the day we trusted our fleet to the mercies of the Pregrada rapids at the Iron Gates, and we had a busy quarter of an hour escaping the whirlpools and avoiding the cross-seas. Unable from our low position to judge of the best channel in the surging waves, we kept as straight a course as the angry and baffling currents would permit, and came out safely in the comparatively smooth waters below, where we had a moment to look at the landscape from mid-stream, and to vote it disappointing after the grand scenery of the Kasan defile. For a mile or two farther on we found we must steer with care, for vicious swirls would suddenly appear and almost snatch the paddles from our hands. Great sturgeon weirs near the Servian shore marked the end of the violent currents, and after passing these we floated tranquilly away down a reach dotted all over with gourds marking the nets and sturgeon lines, which here are set on every side. A pleasant open country was now before us, with hot yellow hills and a town on either hand—Kladovo, with brick fortress and modern earthworks, on the Servian shore, and Turnu Severin high up on a bluff across the river just below. As we had not yet landed in Roumania, we decided to coast along the left bank and see if the landing-place was more interesting than the long straggling modern town which looked so commonplace and unattractive. As we drifted down close to the groups of quaint craft, study-

ing these novel vessels, the first we had seen with masts and sails, we noticed, on the river-bank below, the ruined pier of Trajan's bridge, and thought we would land there and make a sketch of it. As we passed the town we saw a soldier in a white linen uniform trying his best to keep pace with us ; but as he made no sign, we did not dream he had any other motives than those of curiosity. Just



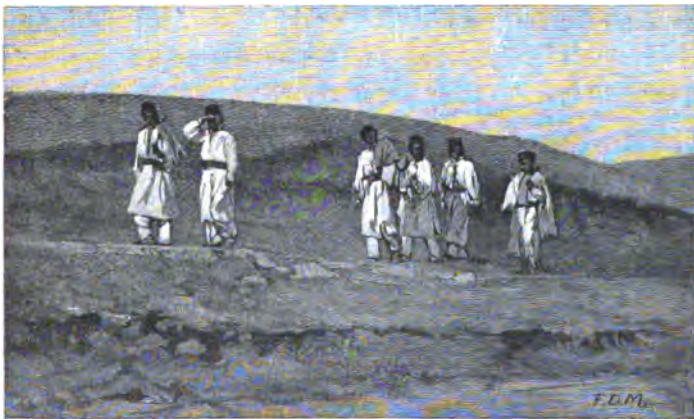
REMAINS OF TRAJAN'S BRIDGE, TURNU SEVERIN

above the ruins a party of soldiers was bathing, a sentinel stood guard in front of a sentry-box, and a few rods farther down men were washing horses, and women were beating clothes on the rocks. We turned our bows towards the bank at the ruined pier, when a sharp hail from the sentinel caused us to look up. "Keep off!" he commanded in vigorous Roumanian. But we, seeing no fortifications anywhere, and having no more sinister intentions than the mild pursuit of art, knew no reason why we should not go ashore where the natives were at work, and continued to paddle slowly towards the mud bank. "Keep off! keep out in the stream!" he yelled again. "Is there a war here?"

we asked, with an attempt at humor. "No; but you sha'n't land! Keep off, or I'll shoot!" "Shoot away; you can't hit!" we retorted, believing it to be the idle threat of a soldier only half in earnest. But he grew more and more excited as we approached, and, drawing a cartridge from his pouch, showed it to us, and pushed it into his rifle. Just at this moment the soldier whom we had seen running along the shore came up breathless, and took command of the military force, promptly ordering the sentry to cover us with his rifle, until the bathing soldiers might seize our canoes. We held off for a few moments, just out of reach, and then, thinking the farce had gone far enough, went ashore and surrendered ourselves to the corporal, the sentry, and the dozen half-naked soldiers. Armed with two expensive and hitherto useless passports, we followed the corporal a long distance into the town to the headquarters, showed our papers to the officer of the day, who immediately gave us our liberty, with polite apologies for the annoyance his men had caused us. When we reached the canoes again, we distributed cigarettes to the bathing party who had guarded our fleet, and sent a few up the bank to the belligerent sentinel, who did not scorn the gift from his recent enemy. A little Jew boy standing near, not having received his share of the cigarettes, remarked, with some feeling and unconscious humor, "If the sentinel had fired at you, I suppose you'd have given him cigars!"

Floating down a great loop of the river in a dry and yellow landscape, we recovered from the excitement of our first adventure with the military, and, as we went along, watched the chattering Servians harvesting on one shore, and the Roumanian women, in the simple costume of white linen chemise, and long woollen fringe hanging behind from the girdle which binds a brilliantly colored apron to the waist, drawing water in classic-shaped jars, or spinning

from the distaff as they walked. Now and then groups of men so resembling the old Dacians, with loose tunic and trousers, sandals, broad belt, and sheepskin cap, that they almost looked like masqueraders, wandered over the arid slopes, spots of brilliant white on a background of sunny yellow. Even the soldiers we saw at the little huts which now stood on the bank at frequent intervals, were as barbaric in appearance as the peasant, and could only be recognized as military by the accoutrements they carried. Along one placid reach we came upon a great fleet of dug-out canoes, each with two Servians, floating down with the current, dragging clumsy nets as they went. Landing below the little village, whose red-tiled roofs peeped out from



ROUMANIAN PRASANTS


among thick foliage, they drew in their nets, towed their boats up against the stream, and, chattering all the while with incessant vigor, drifted down again as before. Almost the only houses to be seen on the Roumanian shore were



SERVIAN FISHING-CANOES

the huts of the pickets, which occupied every point, and guarded every possible landing-place. We realized the fact but slowly, and only after some experience, that we were now under the eye of military supervision, from which we were not to escape until we should paddle out into the Black Sea.

CHAPTER XV

T noon of the day following our introduction to the system of keeping the frontier in Roumania, we heard the sound of rifle-firing and the beating of drums in the Servian village of Brza Palanka, and, on landing there, found the place in the liveliest commotion. Scores of men and women were filling gourds at the wells, and hurrying away up the hill-side back of the town. Besides the burden of water, most of the women and a great crowd of children were carrying baskets of bread and cooked food, and kerchiefs full of grapes. The hot and dusty streets were alive with peasants, mostly in white linen garments, with brilliant red sashes on the men, and richly colored aprons on the women. Both sexes wore very clumsy sandals and heavy woolen socks, or leg-wrappings, bound to the ankle by thongs. While we were wondering at the extraordinary activity of the village, we heard the beat of a drum coming nearer and nearer, and soon a militia company of the wildest-looking men who ever carried a rifle came marching up at quick pace, and wheeling into a narrow lane, tramped along in a cloud of dust, and disappeared over the brow of the hill. Another and then another company, each more savage-looking than the last, went through the same manœuvres, and the whole population followed them, we among the rest. When we came out on the hill-top we saw before us the strangest and most barbaric encampment imaginable. The broad, arid plateau

was covered with shelters or great huts made of oak-boughs, ranged around in a sort of quadrangle, enclosing a level space of twenty-five or thirty acres. In the shadows of these rude shelters were seated hundreds of men eating their mid-day meal, which was brought to them by the women and children, who, after the men were served, squatted on the dry turf a little distance away, and ate their own frugal dinner. Across the great parade-ground were two long heaps of straw in parallel lines, which were evidently the beds of the men at night. We understood, of course, that we were in the annual camp of the Servian militia, and were not surprised that our appearance caused some little interest and curiosity, as we were the only ones in European dress anywhere in sight. Besides, our costume would doubtless have excited comment anywhere, for Danube mud had so changed its tone, and hard usage had so distorted its shape, that it was now decidedly unique in general appearance. The camp guard halted us, and inquired our business, which we, for want of a better answer, stated to be a visit to the captain, trusting to the probability of there being a number of officers of this rank. The guard seemed perfectly satisfied with our reply, and did not even ask which captain we wanted to see, but let us pass at once. We made the same explanation to various inquisitive militiamen, who seemed to resent our sketching, and we slowly made our way into the enclosure. We had eaten nothing since sunrise, and had paddled twenty miles or more, therefore, after our first curiosity was satisfied, we thought we had better return to the village for luncheon, and come back again to see the afternoon drill. But the moment we began to move away, the suspicions of the whole camp were aroused at once, and from all sides came a chorus of shouts and cries in what seemed to us very violent and angry tones. In another instant we were the centre of an excited



CARRYING WATER FOR THE CAMP, PRZA PLANKA

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throng of fierce-looking rascals all armed with knives, and several of them with rifles and bayonets. Explanations were now futile, and, indeed, quite impossible, for our small stock of Servian words was soon exhausted, and, after making several attempts to push past the men who blocked our path, we finally yielded, and were marched off to the hut which was apparently the headquarters. Here we found two officers of the regular army, a captain and a lieutenant, who had charge of the encampment, the former being, as we now understood, the only captain in the camp, and therefore the one whom we had declared we were about to visit.

The officers were naturally astonished at seeing two men in boating dress appear at the door of their hut, for the militiamen stood off at a respectful distance and sent us ahead to announce ourselves; however, they received us with great courtesy, gave us the only two chairs they had, and tried to conceal their bewilderment by urgent offers of hospitality. We produced our passports, displayed the great watermark of the eagle and shield and the arms of the British Empire, and made ourselves as agreeable as possible, all the while wondering what was going to be the re-



"OUR GUARD," SERVIAN MILITIA CAMP

sult of the interview. They seemed to be in no great hurry to get rid of us, and were evidently puzzled what to do with us anyhow; for there could be no question of the validity of our credentials, and they undoubtedly had received no orders to cover this unexpected episode. The difficulty lay in our inability to explain our business; for although we could understand the greater part of what they said, from the resemblance of the language to Russian, we had a very limited stock of Servian words to use in this emergency. Even if we had successfully managed the philological feat of explaining the object of our trip in comprehensible Servian, we should have found the same difficulty here as at every other place since the beginning of our voyage in convincing them that we were engaged in no commercial enterprise, but were simply on a pleasure excursion. The captain sent men in various directions to find some one who spoke German or Hungarian, and at last a gypsy was brought who was supposed to be a linguist. His German was limited to one phrase, "Was wollen Sie?" and not a word of Hungarian did he know, so he was promptly kicked out again. While they were scouring the camp for another interpreter, it suddenly occurred to us to say we were engineers, believing that this must be a recognized profession along the Danube. The word "Ingenieur" acted like a charm. The captain immediately apologized for his stupidity in not understanding our position sooner, and called a guard to conduct us safely to the lines, saying that he could not let us remain in the camp, for the orders were against it; besides, there would be nothing to see, for the soldiers were going to have their after dinner nap, and the parade would not take place until evening. We shook hands cordially with both officers, and followed the brawny chested peasant towards the road to the village. As we marched across the parade-ground we could not resist the



MASSING OF SERBIAN TROOPS ON THE BULGARIAN FRONTIER

temptation to make a little note of the encampment in our sketch-books, but before we could draw a line an excited party of soldiers rushed towards us, the leader brandishing a long knife. It was evident they had all the Oriental fear

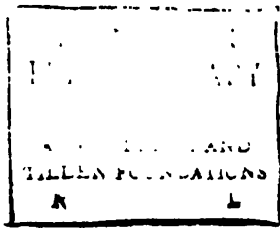
and aversion to being sketched, and we saw they were disposed to make it unpleasant for us. We promptly put away our books, and one of us, drawing a penknife from his pocket, deliberately opened the smallest blade and flourished it in the air as if in a mocking challenge to the giant with the long dagger. The ridiculous situation was appreciated in an instant; the whole crowd stopped shouting to laugh; the weapons were put up, and peace was declared on the basis of mutual mirth. Once beyond the camp lines we did not attempt to enter again, but waved our adieus from the canoes as we floated off.

Our adventure had been a most interesting one, and the result had not been disagreeable. We could not help thinking that these people were very little understood by those correspondents who are continually fermenting the Eastern question and making it a nauseous topic of ignorant discussion in the Press of the civilized world. Such an encampment, we thought, would be sure to be described as a massing of Servian troops near the Bulgarian frontier, and a similar experience to ours would furnish text for interminable letters on the belligerent character of the people of the Balkan provinces. For our part we could readily picture the excitement in an encampment of militia in the United States or of volunteers in England if two Servians, in native costume and carrying sketch-books, should succeed in penetrating the lines, unable to excuse or explain their presence. It is curious to note that a few days after our visit to the camp we saw an English newspaper, and almost the first paragraph we observed in the column of telegraphic news was headed, "Massing of Servian Troops on the Bulgarian Frontier."

We did not care to come in contact with the military any more, for the reason that, now the novelty was worn off, we should scarcely find future experiences interesting enough



DRAWING WATER FOR THE CAMP, BRZA PALANKA

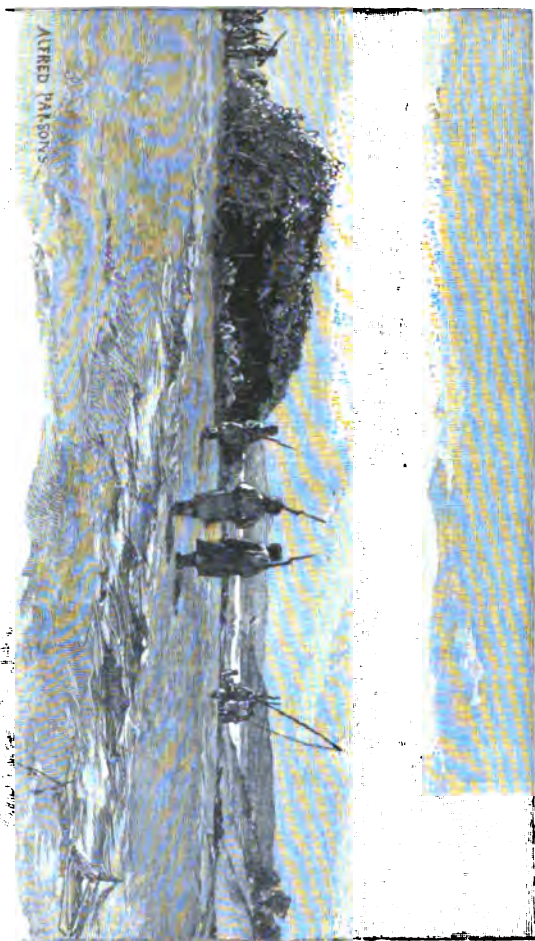


to compensate us for the great loss of time which they were sure to involve. But we were not far beyond the sound of drums at Brza Palanka before we unwittingly fell into a Roumanian trap by drifting, as we sketched, too near that shore. A hail from the water's edge caused us to look up, and we saw three men, dressed like ordinary peasants, as well as we could judge, beckoning us to come ashore. Thinking they had fish or some other desirable commodity to sell, we paddled nearer, intending to land just below. As we came up to them we saw they wore military belts, and at the same time we noticed a hut like those at other picket posts under a tree on the bluff above. Our first impulse was to turn our bows down-stream and paddle away, but, on the first move we made to escape, one of the men ran up to the hut, appeared instantly again with rifle and cartridge-boxes, and proceeded to go through significant exercises in the Roumanian manual of arms. We were rather tired of this game, and surrendered with bad enough grace. The soldiers, however, were ready enough to discontinue hostilities the moment they met us on the shore; the corporal examined our passports, declared them all right, and, with the present of the silver effigy of King Charles of Roumania, we stifled effectively what little enmity still lurked under their coarse linen tunics, and paddled away, friends all round. Notwithstanding our efforts, we had not by any means finished with the military yet, for, as darkness came on, and we tried to find a camp-ground, we could discover no practicable place on the Servian side, nor escape the pickets on the opposite bank. At last we decided to make a counter-move against the enemy, and boldly landed and stalked up to a group of pickets before they had time to run for their one rifle, and asked for guidance to a good camping-ground. They advised us to stay where we were, and avoid difficulties with the posts

below in the darkness, so we hauled up the canoes close by their shallow well, where the Danube water filtered in through the sand, and soon forgot soldiers and passports and the Eastern question.

On this part of the river villages are infrequent, uninteresting, and almost all on the Servian side. The native architecture is neither imposing nor tasteful, but the houses are comfortable, and often very neat inside and out. The frame is made of roughly hewn poles nailed or pegged together, and skilfully wattled all over with sticks about an inch in diameter, which serve to hold the mud with which all the walls and the ceilings are thickly plastered. An open porch or veranda, often occupying nearly the whole front of the house, serves as a nursery, work-room, and general sitting-room for the women in summer, and there is often a raised platform at one side, where the men sit in Turkish fashion and smoke, and drink coffee. This latter feature of native architecture is found at all country inns, and becomes an indispensable adjunct to most houses a little farther down, within the limits of former European Turkey. The Servian houses, as well as the Roumanian structures, which are built on much the same plan, are generally white-washed, and either roofed with red tiles, or thatched with reeds or straw. Tiles are more commonly used in most parts.

The Roumanian bank had now become flat, monotonous, and apparently deserted by everybody except the pickets. For many miles we saw not even a fishing hamlet on either shore, and when, after rather a dull forenoon, we came to the great, white, straggling village of Radujevác, on the right bank, we found it to be the last Servian river town above the Bulgarian frontier, and, fortunately for us, the most picturesque and characteristic place we had seen for days. Few shops, and those of the most primitive order, disturb the rustic simplicity of the streets. Farm-houses



SERBIAN MILITIA, BEZA PALANKA

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with great court-yards enclosed by high wattled fences are half hidden among the trees on either side the broad, dusty highways, and the part of the village near the river is still surrounded by an oaken stockade eight or ten feet high, a relic of the days when such a defence was necessary.

On every veranda and in every farm yard the women sat



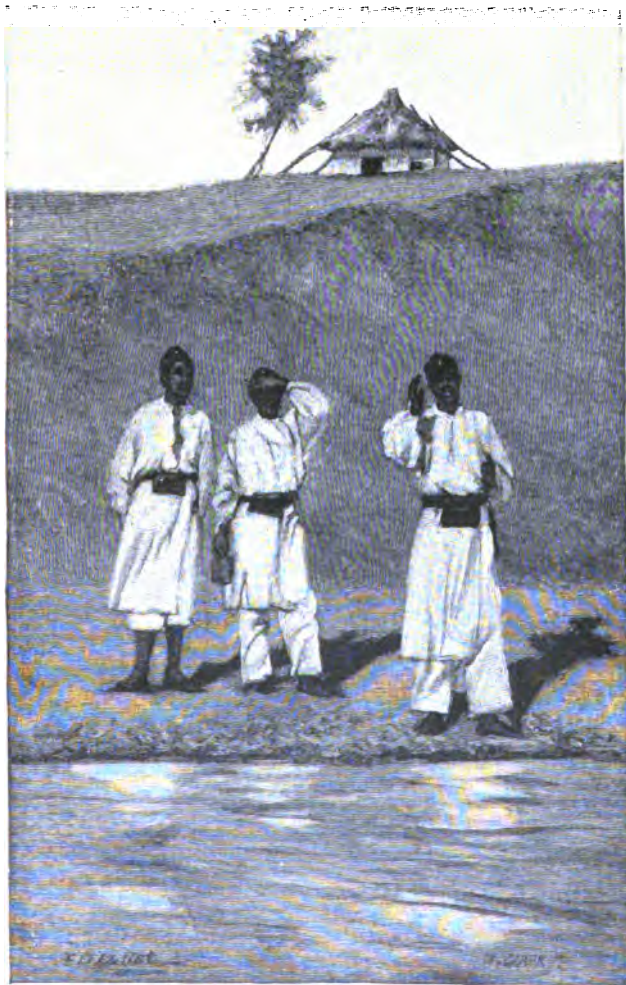
BUILDING A HOUSE IN SERVIA

in the shadow spinning and weaving wool, and their lively gossiping voices mingled cheerily with the clatter of the looms and the whir of the reel. Large-eyed, gray-coated oxen lay and peacefully chewed the cud at the very elbows of the women as they worked. Bright scarlet peppers and great piles of husked Indian-corn made rich splashes of color against the cool shadows of the whitewashed walls, and everywhere brilliant touches of red in the peasant costume flashed among the foliage or gleamed in the sunshine. A few idlers were assembled under the rude awning in front of the wine-shop, to drink the rank plum brandy or thin acid wine; but, with the exception of these drones of the busy hive, everybody was actively engaged in harvest-work or in



HOUSE AT RADUJEVÁC

some domestic manufacture. The bi-weekly Danube steamer touches at the landing at every trip up and down; freight is delivered, produce shipped and sent to some convenient market; but the little community is as far away from civilization as if steamers did not exist, and life there is still quite as primitive as in the days before the enterprising



ROUMANIAN PICKET GUARD

1917
MAY 12 1917
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY
WASHINGTON, D. C.

scouts of modern commerce began to corrupt the native taste of the peasantry with the crudities of modern productions.

In the long reaches below Radujeváç a wider landscape meets the eye. Far to the north the high Carpathians raise their noble heads in grand array, and stretch away to the eastward until their forms are lost in the shimmering distance across the Roumanian plain, while to the south the bold outlines of the Balkans may be faintly distinguished, half hidden by summer clouds. The river takes longer and more stately curves, and flows with somewhat sleepy current. No obstacles now impede its course, no cliffs and crags narrow its channel, and it winds peacefully along without a check until it pours its great flood through a dozen outlets into the Black Sea. Nor is this peaceful stream without its own peculiar charm and beauty. The sunny, smiling landscapes never tire the eye or fatigue the mind, for the majestic stream opens new vistas at every bend, and discloses ever-varied combinations of shore and stream and distance.

CHAPTER XVI



IN one of the pleasantest reaches, a short way below the mouth of the magnificent stream which marks the Bulgarian frontier, the Roumanian town of Kalafat, with its great church and public edifices, shows an imposing mass along a high bluff, and looks down with the conscious pride of newness on the old town and fortress of Widdin, among the green meadows on the opposite shore. From the earthworks of Kalafat, Prince Charles fired his first shot against the Turks in 1877, which found an answering echo until Bulgaria was free and Roumania became a nation. The grim old stronghold of Widdin still shelters a large Turkish population, and above the rigid lines of its half-ruined parapets the slender points of numerous minarets still rise, mute symbols of a faith that lingers even now on the banks of the Danube. It was a pleasant, quiet afternoon when we slowly paddled down the beautiful reach, enchanted by the peaceful landscape and the pastoral beauty of the riverbanks. Kalafat, dominating the great bluff, was accurately reflected in the mirror of the stream, and below, the slender minarets of Widdin and a cluster of masts, showing high above a wooded island, carried the eye away in agreeable perspective. A storm of wind and rain which swept over the country an hour or two before had cleared away, leaving the sky blue and cloudless. Dreaming of the time when the smoke of hostile cannon drifted across the mead-

ows and veiled the face of the high bluff, we floated down towards the distant fortress, scarcely moving a paddle, lest we should sweep all too soon past the charming spot. The sound of dashing water like a cataract suddenly startled us, and we saw just below us, only a short distance away, the whole surface of the river violently agitated, as if a line of rocks or a rough shallow stretched across from bank to bank. Hastily consulting the map, we found there was no such obstruction marked at this point, and we were puzzled to know what was in our path. Our ignorance was of brief duration, for even before we had taken up our paddles again a sudden gust of wind struck the canoes, and we were in the midst of tossing, angry surges. The willows on the bank bent down like corn in a summer gale, and showed their leaves all white in the sunlight. The pure dome of the sky was unbroken by a single cloud, but the wind came tearing up the stream like a cyclone. From the bluffs of Kalafat to the meadows of Widdin the great sleepy river had suddenly become a seething, foaming waste. Our only shelter was under the low mud banks on the Bulgarian side, whither we slowly fought our way, obliged to keep our bows to the wind, and at the same time to draw shorewards with all possible speed. For some moments we were buffeted by the waves and beaten about by the vicious blast, but at last we managed to gain the shelter of some large willows, and landed in the mud opposite Kalafat. We got ashore not a moment too soon, for the river, threshed by the flail of continuous gusts, grew rougher and rougher, and the waves broke with crests like ocean billows. At the spot where we landed was moored a rude fishing-boat, and two young Bulgarian fishermen sat under the trees on the bank above busily weaving rough baskets out of unpeeled willow twigs. Their camp was a bed of boughs under the gnarled, crooked trunk of a tree ; their outfit con-



BULGARIAN FISHERMAN BASKET-MAKING

sisted of a small kettle, a dish, and two wooden spoons, and, stowed away in the shade of a convenient stump, a small stock of green corn, a few watermelons, and a fish or two wrapped up in leaves comprised their whole stock of pro-

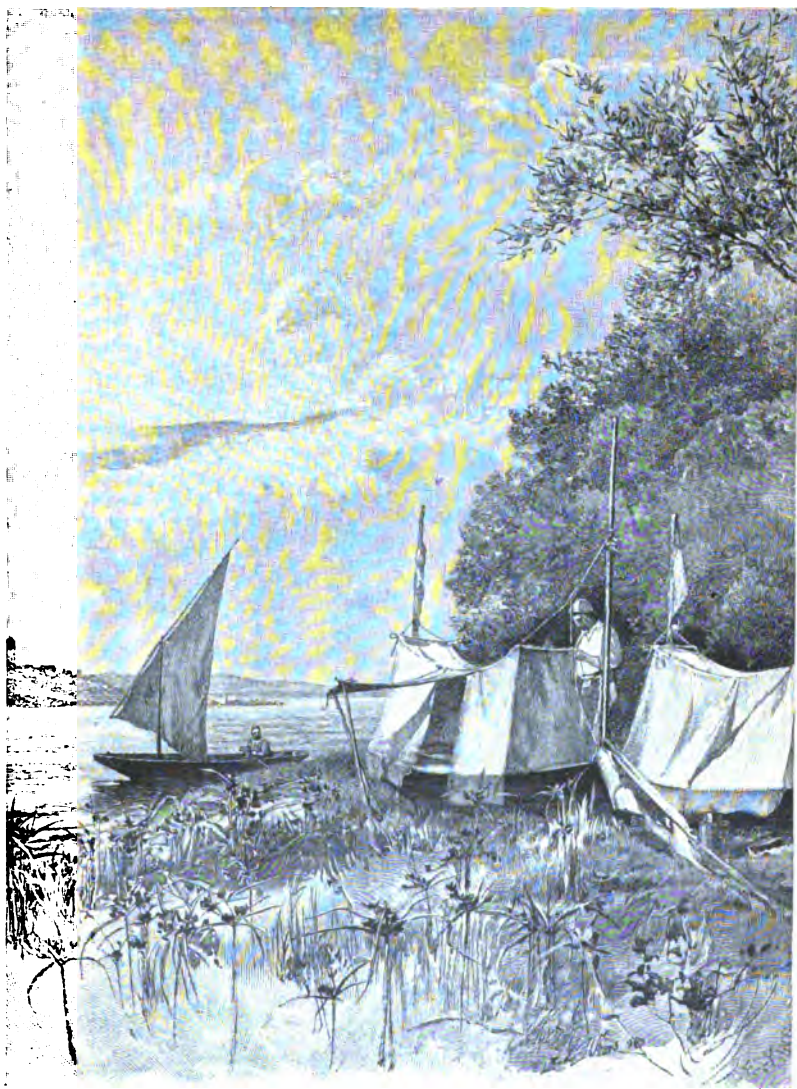
visions. In this simple bivouac they cooked and ate and slept all summer long, fishing by day and by night, and selling their catch at Kalafat or Widdin. A cloak of thick rough woollen cloth, like the mantle of the ancient Dacian, was their covering by night, and their chief protection against the weather. As simple in their tastes as the Indians of the plains, and with no better appliances for use and comfort than may be found in the wigwam of the savage, they live a happy and contented life, their only enemy the mosquito, their only society the solemn herons that wade along the shore in the very smoke of the camp-fire.

They had watched our struggle with the storm, and welcomed us ashore with hearty good-will. Out of their rustic larder they chose the best melons, and insisted on our eating them, and for our supper they selected the freshest and best fish. They firmly refused the money we hesitatingly tendered them as we launched the canoes after the violence of the gale had abated; and when we left them at twilight, they shook hands, and wished us "godspeed" as heartily as if we had camped with them for a season. Some distance below their bivouac, and in full sight of the glimmering lights of both Kalafat and Widdin, we passed the night among the wild-flowers and tangled grasses of a dry bank in a sheltered spot quite enclosed by a dense growth of trees and underbrush, with no more unpleasant intruders than startled water-fowl and drowsy, unambitious mosquitoes.

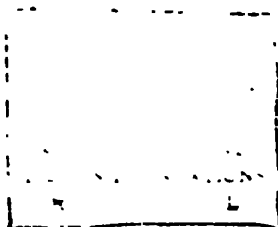
The great brick fortress of Widdin has a strangely aggressive look in the pastoral landscape along the river. The high walls, enclosing with their protecting bulwarks the populous Turkish quarter of the town, with its numerous mosques, rise directly out of the water at the river-front, and tower far above the trees scattered over the broad green meadows, and, although neglected and fast

crumbling to pieces, are grandly imposing in height and extent. No bunting now flutters from the tottering flag-staff, and the yawning embrasures are half filled with rubbish, but the great citadel still dominates with arrogant pride the rambling commercial town in the shadow of its walls, and maintains its dignity as the extreme important outpost of Mahometan faith in Europe — a noble monument to the former military and political supremacy of the Turkish Empire. On the narrow landing-places by the water-gates, as we drifted past in the early forenoon, crowds of Turkish women and children were busy with their washing, and men in variegated jackets, baggy trousers, turban, and sash waddled idly about, or lazily rowed the clumsy boats laden with merchandise. The indescribable squalor and filth of the Orient characterized every feature of the scene, and we now realized, what Belgrade and Ada Kaleh had only hinted to us, the nature of the gulf that separates Mahometan from Christian, not only in religion, but in type, dress, and costume. Widdin is not only one of the most important towns of northern Bulgaria, but is the real head of navigation for sailing-vessels, and in many ways distinctly marks a new phase of river life, and an abrupt political, ethnographical, and philological frontier as well.

When we drew up our canoes on the shore just above the steamer-landing, we were interviewed at once by a smart-looking young officer in white Russian cap and tunic, and red-trimmed brown trousers of Bulgarian homespun, and armed with sabre and revolver, who politely requested the temporary loan of our passports, and, after we had given them up, told us we were free to go where we chose. We were not long in finding our way to the busiest thoroughfare of the town—a long street with low houses, and a continuous line of small shops and cafés, mostly like deep alcoves slightly raised above the level of the pavement.



CANN, OPPOSITE KALAFAT



Hundreds of country people, having disposed of their produce in the great market-place near the citadel, were now busy shopping. The women in this section of Bulgaria wear a short, scant chemise of homespun linen, with full,



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BULGARIAN PEASANT TYPES

long sleeves, often richly embroidered, a bright-colored woollen apron reaching to the hem of the chemise in front, and another of similar stuff, but very full and stiffly plaited, hanging no lower than the bend of the knee behind. They braid their hair in one long piece down their back, and fasten an embroidered white kerchief around their heads, with fresh flowers and ornaments of various kinds. Uncouth rawhide sandals and thick shapeless socks, often brilliant orange in color, protect their feet and ankles. The men here, as in most other districts, wear what may best be described as a clumsy imitation of the Turkish dress, usually made of brown woollen homespun, trimmed with black braid, and, in place of fez, a black sheepskin cap, often varying in shape, but seldom in color.

Among this gay and bustling crowd, sad, pallid-faced Turkish women, and mournful, dejected-looking men, stalked like spectres, or haggled wearily with apathetic shopkeepers. Mounted policemen, very like Cossacks in appearance, galloped recklessly through the multitude, and a numerous force of men on foot, in neat brown uniforms, watched with active vigilance every unusual stir among the people, and quelled with rough-and-ready authority every incipient disturbance caused by too much slivovitz (plum brandy). We strolled across the market-place and over the moat into the great citadel, and passing the inner gate, were in a quarter as characteristically Turkish as the remotest corner of Stamboul. The huddle of people in the narrow, crooked streets; the curious shops, and the open manufactories of all sorts of articles: the latticed windows, tumble-down fountains, and half-ruined mosques; the close, musty smell, and general squalor and worn out appearance—all were unmistakably Turkish, and everything indicated extreme poverty and a condition of life which excited our heartiest sympathies. Intense love of locality binds this people to the place, and,



TURKISH TYPES

isolated by religion, language, and customs, with no rights of citizenship and no common interests with their neighbors, they endure with the patience characteristic of their race the aggravating tyranny of the Bulgarians.

Three fresh languages assailed our ears in Widdin, and we plunged without preparation from the tangled maze of Roumanian and Servian into the quagmires of Bulgarian, Turkish, and modern Greek. We expected to hear two new languages here, but were surprised when we took our luncheon in a restaurant to find the bill of fare written in Greek, and to hear the waiters shouting orders in this lisping speech. We were now well across the line that separates the Orient from the Occident, and within touch of Constantinople and Athens. The markets gave us abundant evidences that we had reached a milder climate. Grapes were delicious, plentiful, and cheap, the best varieties costing less than two cents a pound. Tomatoes, egg-plant, and sweet-peppers were larger and better than we had seen before, and melons and green corn were almost out of season. Fresh meat was about five cents a pound, and caviar, for which delicacy Widdin is celebrated, was readily obtained, but at a price very little lower than in any other market. Knowing that we had a rather desolate part of the river before us, we laid in a good supply of stores of all kinds, except wine, which, we learned, was easily to be obtained at any village, and when the town had gone to sleep at noon, sought our passports at the police headquarters ; but the official in charge of this department had gone home for his dinner and siesta, and we were obliged to kick our heels in idleness and impatience until he returned, an hour and a half later.

Just below Widdin, at the Bulgarian town of Arčer Palanka, the general course of the Danube changes from the south to the east ; and to the town of Cernavoda, in the Dobrudscha, about 300 miles below, the river keeps the latter direction with few and slight deviations. The long, straight reaches were here enlivened by many sailing-vessels of the fifteenth-century type, with high ornate sterns, and single mast set midway between the bow and stern. Some-



TURKISH QUARTER, WIDDIN

THE UNIVERSITY OF
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TURKISH VESSELS

times we met them gayly ploughing their way up-stream, with every bellying sail drawing full, and again we saw them dragged slowly against the current by a long line of patient Turkish sailors harnessed to a tow-rope; or else we came across them tied to the trees in some quiet spot awaiting a favorable wind, the decks covered with sleeping sailors, no man on watch. The Roumanian shore from Kalafat down for scores of miles at a stretch is as straight and level as if drawn with a ruler, and the landscape on that bank of the river is reduced to its simplest terms. The Bulgarian side is seldom monotonous, and never for any long distance flat and marshy. High grassy hills approach the river, and recede again at intervals, enclosing between their spurs great fertile meadows covered with farms. Here and there on the bare slopes of the rounded hills quite extensive villages are seen, usually at some distance from the river. Many of these are only great irregular collections of hovels dug in

the ground and roofed with earth, and even the best of them can boast no more than one or two buildings of a better type than the ordinary hut of sun-dried bricks or of wattle and mud. Most of the habitations, together with the great straw and hay ricks—always the prominent feature of every village—are enclosed by walls of mud or by wattled fences, and the streets, which ramble along casually between these boundaries, are seldom better than gullies or watercourses. The interiors are often surprisingly neat and tidy, even in the rudest hovel, and whitewash is used with freedom.

About three hours' paddle below Widdin we came to the flourishing town of Lom Palanka, famous for the purity of its water, and somewhat renowned for the quality of its wine. We ran ashore, intending to fill our wine-bottles and then to move on to an early camp. We fancied that the Lom Palankians would be eager to welcome us when they saw us land prepared to trade, but the delegation who met us as we floundered out of the mud looked uncommonly hostile, every man wearing a uniform, and all more or less heavily armed. Escape was impossible, so we began to parley, and asked the way to a wine-shop with as much politeness as our meagre vocabulary allowed. The only response to this question was a stern demand for our passports. We promptly produced them, and, to our chagrin and astonishment, saw them disappear in the capacious pocket of the chief officer of the little army. The Custom-house people at Widdin had told us that we could land anywhere to buy stores without giving up our papers, and we explained this as well as we were able, and demanded our passports again, preparing to leave without making our desired purchases. Remonstrances were worse than idle, for they soon led to our arrest, and we were marched off to the police-station, a long way up the main street. The chief was not in his office, and he

was unearthed from his hiding-place only after a half-hour's search by a large scouting party of policemen. The usual series of questions was put to us, and we sandwiched our replies between bursts of indignant language, which perhaps it would be unwise to chronicle here. The pachydermatous young man, bristling with authority, and assuming the indifference of immeasurable superiority, paid little attention to our explanations or our expletives, and after slowly spelling out the words from our passport, "We, Robert, Arthur, Talbot, Gascoyne Cecil, Marquess of Salisbury, Earl of Salisbury, Viscount Cranborne, Baron Cecil," and from the other, "Robert Lincoln," copied the numbers in a book,



BULGARIAN VILLAGE

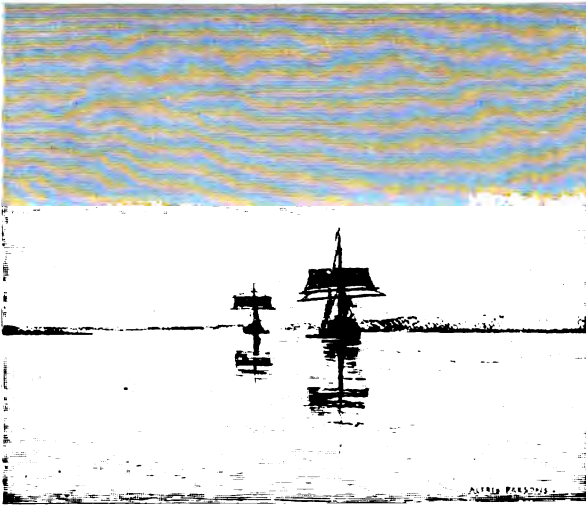
ordered us to sign our names, and then let us go. Hot with wrath at the delay, we paddled off, determined to leave Lom Palanka out of sight if we had to sleep in a swamp. We had the good-fortune, however, to discover just after dark

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a reasonably good camp-ground on a low bank of sun-baked mud covered with coarse grasses, and the next morning found we had chosen the spot where the natives had their summer clam-bakes, for great heaps of fresh-water clam-shells, the well-picked bones of a sheep or two, and traces of recent fires were scattered all around us.

CHAPTER XVII

BETWEEN Lom Palanka and Sistova, a stretch of about 150 miles—which, by-the-way, we paddled in less than two days and a half—there are only three towns on the river, Cibar Palanka, Rahova, and Nicopolis, and these are all Bulgarian. There are two or three busy grain-shipping stations on the Roumanian side, however, and we could see on the edge of a low plateau, miles back from the river,



BECALMED

frequent prosperous-looking places, and, opposite Nicopolis, the church-towers of Turnu Magurelli, one of the most important towns in southern Roumania, rising above the trees. This shore of the river is, for almost the entire distance referred to, a broad, low marsh, intersected by numerous lagoons and shallow, irregular lakes, often ten miles or more in length. The lonely picket-stations are the only human habitations along the bank. In agreeable contrast to this dull and desolate waste of marsh and willow swamp, is the rich pastoral country of Bulgaria opposite. Although villages and farm-houses are not numerous, we saw everywhere abundant signs of life. The meadows were dotted with hay-stacks, and great net-works of deeply-worn cattle-paths scored the smooth slopes of the hills, all burned yellow by the summer sun. Before the greatest heat of the day came on, immense herds of cattle and buffaloes, driven by Turkish cowboys, rushed panting down the hill-side in a cloud of dust to cool themselves in the stream. The buffaloes wallowed in the muddy places, and then lay down with the tops of their heads alone visible above water, like uncouth amphibious animals. Great flocks of sheep stood on the shore by the water's edge, crowding together in a solid mass, and holding their heads close to the ground to escape the heat from the direct rays of the sun, and multitudes of goats were scattered all over the steep and arid slopes. The shepherds dig little shallow caves in the mud bluffs, with steps leading to them, where they lie and sleep for hours in the daytime; others curl up in the gullies, so that every yard of shade on the rough bank has its human or its animal occupant, and sometimes men and goats, both seeking to avoid the sun, lie down peacefully together in the same narrow cleft or in the shadow of the same projecting corner.

In the broad straight reaches of the river the frequent



FROM EMIR, SE.

ON THE BULGARIAN SHORE, NEAR RAHOVA

ALFRED PAKSONS,

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sand-banks were covered with water-fowl. Thousands upon thousands of noisy wild-geese, hosts of ducks, plover, and other game birds, rose into the air as we approached, almost deafening us with their cries. Wheeling round in broad circles, they settled down again before we had fairly passed them. Ranks of solemn pelicans awkwardly flopped into the water, and swam ahead of us in stately dignity scarcely out of pistol-shot, turning their huge, ill-balanced beaks from side to side, and if we came too near, flew up with a tremendous splashing and fluttering. Tall herons soared away out of the shallows on every side, and swans and storks sailed overhead in graceful flight. Sometimes we paddled in the full light of noonday up to within a few yards of slender, white cranes wading among the water-grasses, and once approached within a paddle's length of a large gray heron standing on one leg and blinking in the brilliant glare of the sun. The flora of the river-bank in this region is best described in a quotation from Alfred Parsons' note-book: "By the camp opposite Kalafat was a very handsome sedge with brown flowers, a mass of blossoms of the flowering rush, and plenty of excellent dew-berries. A flat below Lom Palanka was covered with a thorny, leguminous shrub, tufts of small purple flowers and prickly red seed-pods, small yellow asters, tall scabious with pale blossoms, and chiccory, which has been a constant flower for a long distance down the river. The slopes above the limestone cliffs below Rahova were covered with feather sumac and lilac bushes. Wild-grape vines grow all over the willows on an island above Sistova, and the marshy lake near there had great yellow patches of villarsia. On the edge of this lake grow arrow-head and flowering rush, and where the land is drier are seen purple and yellow dwarf thistles, a small scentless heliotrope, and a white scutellaria. Tamarisk grows on the sandy flats."

The river life was mostly confined to the larger craft; very few small boats were seen, and almost no fishermen. The great clouds of canvas on the Turkish vessels gleamed above the trees behind the islands far in the perspective, and the black smoke of tow-boats with their trains of loaded lighters was a constant feature in the ever-changing landscape. Occasionally a huge flat-boat of the roughest build, piled high with a cargo of red and yellow earthenware, melons, sacks of charcoal, and other miscellaneous merchandise, floated down in the gentle current, steered by Turks in costumes of varied hue, the whole reflecting a

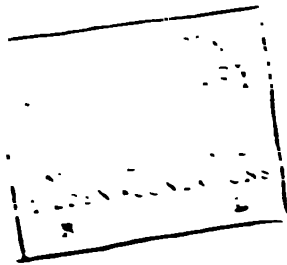


TURKISH FLAT-BOAT

mass of glowing color in the stream. Each of the river towns we passed was the centre of great activity. Crowds of peasants' carts laden with grain covered the broad strand in the vicinity of the steamboat-landing, waiting their turn to discharge their loads into the lighters. When the grain is harvested and threshed, the farmers load their rude carts, and lead the slow and stupid buffaloes, often several days' journey, to the nearest river town, where they find a certain market for their produce. The whole country is covered with trains of creaking carts, and peasants' bivouacs are



TURKISH WOMEN AT SISTOVA



scattered all over the scorched hill-sides and everywhere along the dusty highways. They carry no tents nor shelters of any sort, and only the simplest food for themselves and their beasts. When night overtakes them they lie down on the ground beside their carts, and, wrapped in their rough coats, sleep as peacefully as their tired oxen. Their whole outfit is as rude and uncouth as it was centuries ago, and the native carts have not improved in build since they transported the supplies of Trajan's armies. The only iron used in their construction are the linchpins and the rings which bind together the great hubs; the roughly-hewn felloes, the different parts of the body of the cart, and of the yoke as well, are all held together by wooden pegs.

We noticed at Nicopolis the first of the series of Russian monuments along the river which commemorates the bravery of those who fell in the late war—a plain stone shaft on a hill-top just above the town; and when we landed there found every evidence of increasing prosperity and enterprise in new buildings, public squares and promenades, and general improvements. A friendly young soldier-policeman piloted us about, acted as our cavass or special guard, saw that we were not cheated at the shops, and at the same time busied himself with keeping order in the drinking-places, and cleared the streets when they became congested with traffic. He did not so much as ask to see our papers, and we began to be more hopeful about our trip along the Bulgarian frontier, and looked forward to landing at Sistova, twenty-five miles below, with no disagreeable anticipations.

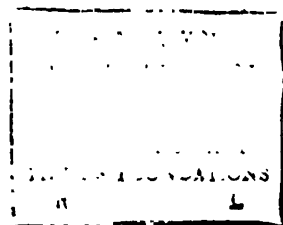
The large biweekly passenger steamer on its downward trip reached Sistova a few moments after we did, and we were just in time to witness the exodus of twenty-five Turkish families who were leaving the country for Asia Minor by way of Chernavoda, Kustendji, and Constantinople.

The whole remaining Turkish population of the town had turned out to see them off, and veiled women in solemn rows along the shore looked from a distance like so many queer river birds. We were assured by the agent of the steamboat company that similar emigrations are of frequent occurrence, but that most of the families sooner or later wander back again, after having found that their condition is not bettered by change of residence. Sistova has improved since the war in much the same way that Nicopolis has, but the river-front remains unchanged, and looks today very much as it did when, after the crossing in June, the Russians built their pontoon-bridge from the low island opposite and marched their armies through the town to Plevna and the Balkan passes.

We made an interesting excursion of three days to the battle-fields of Plevna, fifty miles distant from Sistova, across a rolling country, sparsely inhabited, but producing a great deal of wheat and Indian-corn. The heat was intense and the dust terrible, but every moment of the excursion was crowded with interest and novelty. Travelling, as the natives do, by private conveyance, and stopping at the khans, which are still the only houses of entertainment in country places, we were thrown into intimate relations with the people, and, it must be confessed, found little in their character to encourage the belief in their capacity for immediate improvement. It is undoubtedly a fact that the peasants between the foot-hills of the Balkans and the Danube are the least agreeable specimens of the race to be found in the country, and it would be unfair to judge of the young nation by the inhabitants of a particular district. Their most curious characteristics are their emotionless expression and their habitual silence. We seldom saw them smile, and almost never heard them laugh. All the river people we met until we crossed the Bulgarian frontier were



OLD MOSQUE, RUSTCHUK



cheery and more or less communicative, and we heard singing, laughter, and constant merry chatter among the people as we passed. But in Bulgaria these cheerful sounds no longer came to our ears; villages near the river were as silent as the grave; the peasants at the landing-places stared at us stupidly as we went along, and no one ever hailed us pleasantly or showed any intelligent interest in our fleet.

Russian monuments are seen on several hills between Sistova and Rustchuk, about thirty-five miles below, and scarcely a mile of the river but has some interesting history in connection with the struggle along the Danube in the early part of the summer campaign in 1877. By a curious coincidence, we happened to camp the afternoon we left



BULGARIAN BUFFALO CART

Sistova near the very place where, fourteen years before, on the same date, the writer had crossed the river at the end of a long courier's ride, described in the pages of *HARPER'S MAGAZINE* not long since. It is not strange, therefore, that as we paddled down the beautiful calm reach the following morning the familiar lines of the landscape stimulated a flow of reminiscences of the campaign. Nearing Pyrgos, and in sight of the monument on one of the great rounded hills where the battle was fought

in which young Sergius Leuchtenberg, the cousin of the present Czar, was killed, we were startled by the unmistakable sound of the grunt of a Gatling-gun and the rattle of small-arms. We could not at first believe our ears, each of us thinking this dramatic and suggestive accompaniment to the tales of the war was a mental distortion of ordinary noises brought about by our preoccupation with the subject. However, as we paddled along, increasing our stroke in our growing excitement, we discovered that the sounds came from the hills near Rustchuk, and although we could see no smoke, we could accurately distinguish the reports of rifles in irregular scattering succession, like the prelude of a great battle. Our mystification increased with every moment, and we hastened on past the low willow-fringed shores on the Roumanian side, studying the rocky bluffs across the river and the billowy summits of the bare hills to find a solution of the enigma. The sounds ceased as suddenly as they began, and as we rounded a wide bend full of islands, and came in sight of the minarets of Rustchuk and the great buildings in Giurgevo on the low hills far across the marshes opposite, we met a small Bulgarian gunboat with a machine-gun at the bow and discovered at the same time, on a broad plateau under the old Turkish redoubt back of the town, the summer encampment of the garrison. What we had heard was, undoubtedly, the morning target practice on land and the trial of the machine-gun on the river.

Rustchuk is the most important Bulgarian town on the river, and situated as it is on the main route to Constantinople, *via* the Rustchuk-Varna Railway and the Black Sea, and only two hours by rail from Bucharest, is one of the best-known cities on the lower Danube. It is at present in the disagreeable phase of transition from an old Turkish town to a modern trade centre, and has neither the picturesque-



MARKET-PLACE, SILISTRIA

ness of an old place nor the comforts of a new one. Imposing shops, with all sorts of Viennese and Parisian goods, chiefly neckties and ready-made clothing, crowd the shanties where native rawhide sandals are made, and the street butcher slaughters his animal before the plate-glass window of a large grocery, filled with English, French, and German delicacies. Some of the streets are well paved and kept in repair, while in others the passer often stumbles over the half-buried shells thrown into the town by the Russians in 1877.

For about thirty miles below Rustchuk both shores are flat and devoid of life. We had our old enemy, a head-wind, against us; and, indeed, from this point to the end of our journey—about 300 miles below—we scarcely had an hour's relief from this persistent opposition to our progress. We had fought our way for a few miles, when we overtook a tow-boat with several large Greek grain lighters steaming down-river at less speed than we were making. As we ran alongside, the captain of one of the lighters cordially invited us to tie up and take it easy. Perhaps it was not a very sporting thing to do, but it appealed to us as an excellent scheme to defeat the efforts of the head-wind and to see the landscape at our leisure, and we therefore promptly accepted the invitation, and fastened our canoes to the lighters. In this way we slowly went on for several hours, until we came to the town of Turtukai, on the Bulgarian side, where the hills again crowd the river. There we cast off, and instinctively avoiding the Roumanian pickets, whose unwelcome attentions we had escaped for several days, paddled down to a beautiful camping-ground in the middle of a group of islands covered with poplar, wych-elm, willows, and brambles, and a tangle of wild-grape vines growing to the tops of the highest trees.

From the important part the town and fortress of Silistria

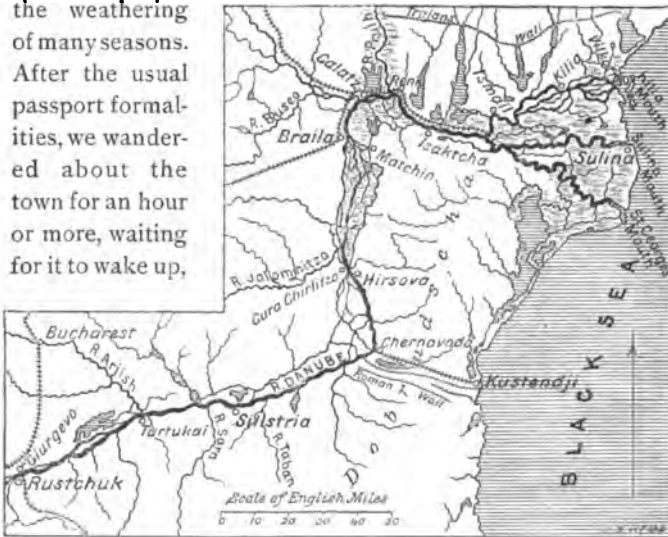


MOSQUE IN SILISTRIA

has played in the history of European Turkey for the last hundred years, we anticipated finding a stronghold far more grand and imposing than any on the river, with the possible exception of Belgrade and Peterwardein. Whatever may have been in past times the strategical importance of the place, it certainly gave us little notion of its strength. It occupies the whole of a low point projecting far into the

river, which here spreads out into a broad shallow reach, filled with long low islands. Along the greater part of the water-front of the town are two walls, one within the other, more resembling embankments to protect the town from inundations than constructions for military purposes. Behind these walls, as seen from the river, domes and minarets rise above the roofs of the town, which rambles back from the river to the great bare slopes behind. All over the tops of the hills are visible the lines of great earthworks, rounded and softened by

the weathering of many seasons. After the usual passport formalities, we wandered about the town for an hour or more, waiting for it to wake up,




FROM RUSTCHUK TO SULINA

and had sufficient leisure to examine the extensive improvements in progress here, which bid fair to reduce at no distant date the picturesque old town to the commonplace level of a modern city. We could not help, however, being interested

in the building of an enormous school-house, which will be, when finished, the most imposing modern structure in the town—a gratifying indication of the successful enforcement of the compulsory education law in Bulgaria.

After the hundreds of miles of uninteresting scenery on the Roumanian shore, it seemed as if monotony could go no further, but opposite Silistria the far-off hills recede still more, the bank grows flatter, and at last degenerates into a swamp, with nothing but the wretched picket huts to break the interminable line of small willow-trees. Sluggish branches of the river straggle off to the left and cut the morass into two large islands, honey-combed with lakes and intersected by lagoons. High grass-covered hills skirt the right bank, and here and there, at long distances apart, villages make irregular brown patches on the yellow slopes. The long reaches become more and more desolate, and in the narrow channels among the numerous islands there is the solitude of an unexplored wilderness, and the banks are a tangle of great trees and undergrowth. Black mud everywhere covers the shallows, and the banks are lined with a sticky, fetid deposit, and sometimes, after sunset, the odor emanating from this mass of river scourings is almost overpowering. We often landed on what appeared to be a hard beach, only to find it a jelly of mud, with a thin crust of sand on top, through which we broke at every step. All the river men we met were suffering from the Danube fever, which, in the lower river, is the constant scourge of the population.

CHAPTER XVIII

TEN miles below Silistria the Roumanian frontier crosses the river, and the district of the Dobrudscha begins. To our surprise, the line of pickets still continued along the left bank, although we were fairly in the Roumanian kingdom, and now and then a soldier would appear in sight, take a lively interest as we passed, and sometimes order us to come ashore. We treated these summonses with scorn, and paddled along heedless of the shouts which followed us.

The river life was fast becoming more active as we went down. Numerous tow-boats with lighters passed to and fro, and every open reach was lively with gaudily painted sailing-vessels, manned by Turks dressed in all colors of the rainbow, and looking as little like sailors as the craft they were in looked like modern civilized ships. On one occasion we were watching a large fleet of these quaint vessels merrily careering up-stream with a favorable wind, when a sudden squall struck them and scattered them like leaves with the violence of its blast. One succeeded in gaining the land in deep water, and made fast to the trees there, and through the dense showers of rain which followed the wind we could see the remainder of the proud fleet, all scattered and dilapidated, stranded along the shore in every direction. We now had our own boats to look after, for there was no shelter in which to land. A group of friendly Greek lighters in tow gave us but temporary protection from



ROUMANIAN PEASANTS SELLING FLOWERS AND FRUIT

the squall, for, as the storm increased in violence and the wind veered round, we found ourselves on as ugly a lee shore as could be imagined—the iron sides of a loaded barge. However, we managed at last to moor the canoes under the overhanging stern of one of the lighters, and, in company with a native boat full of men and women, rode out the storm in safety.

From Silistria to Chernavoda the topography of the coun-

try near the river alters very little in character, but we noted various other changes which interested us. The type of small boat was now entirely different from the rude skiff farther up-stream, resembling the Turkish caïque, with high pointed bow and stern; and our old friends, the current-mills, no longer had a supplementary scow to support the axle, but, with a wheel on either side, made a sort of caricature of a steamboat anchored in the stream. On the hills above the villages numerous windmills waved their long arms, testifying to the prevalence of wind, and everywhere ancient tumuli broke the rounded contours of the grassy summits. Here, too, Trajan has left an imperishable monument to his mighty conquest—an immense wall of earth, which extends across the Dobrudscha from Chernavoda to Kustendji on the Black Sea, and the high rampart is plainly visible on the great rolling hills, apparently as well preserved in shape after the lapse of so many centuries as the Russian earth-works constructed a decade and a half ago on the neighboring summits. A fine railway bridge is now building across the river at Chernavoda, to connect the Kustendji Railway with the Roumanian system, and immense stone piers on the north bank are already finished. The construction-shops and workmen's quarters in connection with this enterprise have transformed the simple little village of Chernavoda into a hideously commonplace settlement. At this point the river sweeps round in a wide curve, changing its course from a general easterly to a northerly direction, and at Hirsova, thirty miles below—a long straggling town at the foot of a bold spur of rocky hills—it divides into a number of small branches, which enclose and intersect with sinuous windings a great irregular marsh, twelve or fifteen miles in width, and extending to the River Pruth, at the Russian frontier, fifty miles to the north.

As we left Hirsova, near the end of the day, and saw the

grand outlines of the hills grow all purple in the afternoon light, we were slow to realize the fact that our route would no longer lead us past these pleasant slopes, which from the distant Carpathian range downward had shown us an ever-varying and ever-beautiful panorama along the river-bank. The shortest of the sluggish branches of the river skirts the eastern limits of the Roumanian plain, and paddling into this narrow channel, we found ourselves in a brief half-hour in a region quite unlike any we had yet seen. Both banks are low, and covered with tall reeds alternating with willow patches. The only habitations are little fishing-stations, and these are miles apart. Even the line of picket-houses is no longer seen along the shore, for it follows the branch



HIRSOVA

that flows along the eastern boundary of the marsh under the high land there. The fishermen's dwellings are hovels of the rudest kind, built of mud, thatched with reeds, and surrounded by fences of the same material. How human

beings can exist in these fever-infested marshes will always remain a mystery to us.

We found a reasonably solid landing-place on a little island near one of these stations, and a short distance above the little hamlet of Gura Ghirlitza. The botanist, whose duty it was to gather drift wood, brought back from his rambles a great bouquet of wild-flowers — melilot, loosestrife, convolvulus, blue veronica, chiccory, tamarisk, snapdragon, and many others; and we were both so much engaged, one with his botanizing and the other with his pots and pans, that we did not notice the approach of a great lotka full of people until it ran ashore in the mud near our camp two or three yards from the bank. They shouted to us to come and pull them up; but, seeing among the crowd in the boat two soldiers fixing their bayonets, and several other men armed with guns, to say nothing of an officer in full uniform, we did not propose to assist this hostile force to disembark, and paid no attention to them. Finally one of the party jumped out into the mud, helped the rest to land, and the small army bore down upon us in martial array. When they came near enough to see the canoes, the officer in command, an intelligent young fellow of agreeable manners and cultivated speech, suddenly threw aside all show of hostility, and asked us politely what kind of craft these were, and where we had come from in such frail boats. This was a prelude to friendly relations we had not anticipated, for we looked with distrust on every man in uniform. Of course we were only too glad to explain who we were and what we were after, and arms were at once laid aside, and the whole party instantly began to inspect our canoes from bow to stern, enchanted with the polished rudder, astonished at the folding centre-board, and delighted with every detail of the finish. In a half-hour or less, with many apologies for interrupting the preparation of our din-

ner, they withdrew, after making us promise to return their call at the village the next morning. We heard the grocer and the butcher fire off the guns they had loaded on the way to assist in capturing the suspected smugglers, and we were interrupted no more that night.



GURA GHIRLITZA

Early the next forenoon we landed at the village, and had quite a reception by our friends of the evening before. The whole population gathered around the canoes, and studied them with intelligent curiosity. They were the first natives since we passed the Bulgarian frontier above Widin who had shown any particular emotion at the sight of the novel craft, and our hearts warmed to them in consequence. Perhaps it was partly on this account that we liked the village, for, after all, it was only a small collection of low, whitewashed, roughly-thatched cottages, straggling along crooked, dusty streets partly shaded by small trees, and everywhere enclosed by fences of dry reeds. But there were a good many bright flowers in the tiny gardens, luxu-

riantly-growing squashes and gourds were climbing all over the thatched roofs, the clean white linen garments of both sexes were refreshing to look upon, and the brilliant aprons and elaborate red embroidery worn by the women made rich spots of color in the warm sunlight. It was well for us that we went away from Gura Ghirlitza in an agreeable frame of mind, for a persistent head-wind blew straight upstream, no matter how the river turned and twisted. We passed scores of Turkish vessels dashing along up the choppy current with a great splashing at the bows, and others trying to work down-river by the force of the stream. For several hours we struggled against the gale and the rough sea, between banks with few signs of human life and scarcely a rod of cleared land, and in the afternoon passed through miles of unbroken forest, extending in every direction as far as we could see. From this the most desolate and deserted reach of the whole river we had navigated, we at last emerged quite suddenly into a sunny open country, with a high bluff a short distance below, where tall chimneys showed above the dense foliage on a large island, and in a few moments we were in the main stream again, opposite the bustling town of Braila, where the straggling arms of the river unite, and it again assumes its normal width and majestic aspect. The stream was crowded with vessels of every description, from the native lotkas to the great English freight propellers, whose ugly iron hulls towered high over all local craft. On the shore opposite the town scores of Turkish vessels were made fast to the bank, miles of loaded lighters were anchored along the channel, and great steamers were moored to the quay several ranks deep, all receiving their loads of grain. Thousands of men of every nationality and in motley dress were swarming like bees all over the cargo boats, carrying sacks of grain from the army of carts on the shore and pouring it into the



open bays. The English flag fluttered from many a mast, the names of familiar ports could be read on almost every great rounded stern, and the English language distinctly reached our ears in the babel of several other tongues.

We had paddled a long forty miles against a heavy wind and sea, and preferring the quiet of camp to

the confusion of the busy town, landed on an unoccupied meadow in full view of Braila, extending far along the bluff and looking down upon the forest of masts on the river, and with the spires and domes of Galatz distinctly visible on a high point of land a few miles below us.

Braila is at the head of navigation for sea-going vessels, and as it is only about 125 miles from the mouth of the river, is practically a port on the Black Sea. A few years ago it was of secondary commercial importance to Galatz, a larger town similarly placed on a bluff fifteen miles farther down-stream. Since the Turkish war, however, the grain trade has been gradually transferred to the former city, until it has now absorbed the whole of this commerce, and has become the chief shipping port for all the produce of the grain-growing regions of Roumania and northern Bulgaria. Extensive docks and immense grain elevators have been built there, and will soon be in active operation. We had seen at various places below Rustchuk indications of the proximity of Russia, chiefly in the architecture of churches, with their green domes and bulbous spires, but also in various details of costume, carriages, and harnesses. At Braila all the carts which carry grain to the steamers have the Russian bow over the horses' withers, and many Russian signs are seen on the shops. All the public carriages of Galatz are driven by Russians, members of a peculiar religious sect, who wear their national costume, consisting of a long black velvet coat with full skirts, plaited at the waist, and two rows of silver buttons on the breast, tall boots, and the characteristic flat-topped cap. The fashion of employing Russian coachmen, once prevalent all over Roumania, is fast dying out now, however, and is said to continue in full force in Galatz alone.

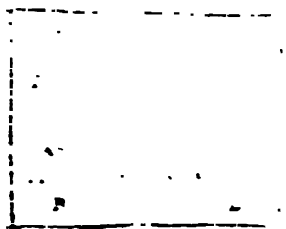
The army of the Czar made the first crossing of the Danube in 1877 from Galatz, across the marsh to a spur of the

bold hills near the village of Matchin, and it was in one of the narrow arms of the river here that the Turkish monitors were entrapped and destroyed. Galatz covers much more territory than its neighbor above, spreading far out over a level plateau, along highways which are deserts of dust in summer and sloughs of mire in winter. Part of the town is laid out with some regularity, and there are a few streets well cared for and with new buildings; but the thoroughfares on the slope of the plateau near the river are narrow, crooked, and steep, and most of the pavements are simply atrocious. There is no gas manufactured, but an abundance of water is brought into the town, and a fountain is in constant operation in the tiny park, where a military band plays light French airs every evening to a motley crowd of many nationalities. The better class of Roumanians have a deeply-rooted admiration for France and for everything French, and in all the cities there are curious and often ludicrous attempts to imitate Parisian architecture and to follow the customs of that capital. This is the result, of course, of the French education of the youth of the leading families for generations past, and here, as in all countries where civilization has reached only the second stage—the purely commercial one—the few who leaven the mass do not always judiciously winnow the wheat from the chaff in the foreign seed they plant at home.

The larger part of the town consists of houses only one story in height, with stucco façades and tiled roofs. There is almost nothing to interest the sight-seer in the way of architecture or relics of antiquity, and, indeed, the most notable object of interest in town is the tomb of Mazeppa in the Church of St. Maria. In certain quarters the population is very dense, and the streets and dwellings there are in a state of indescribable filth. The crowded market-places are in the morning perfect museums of types and costumes. Al-



GYPSY CAMP AT GALATZ

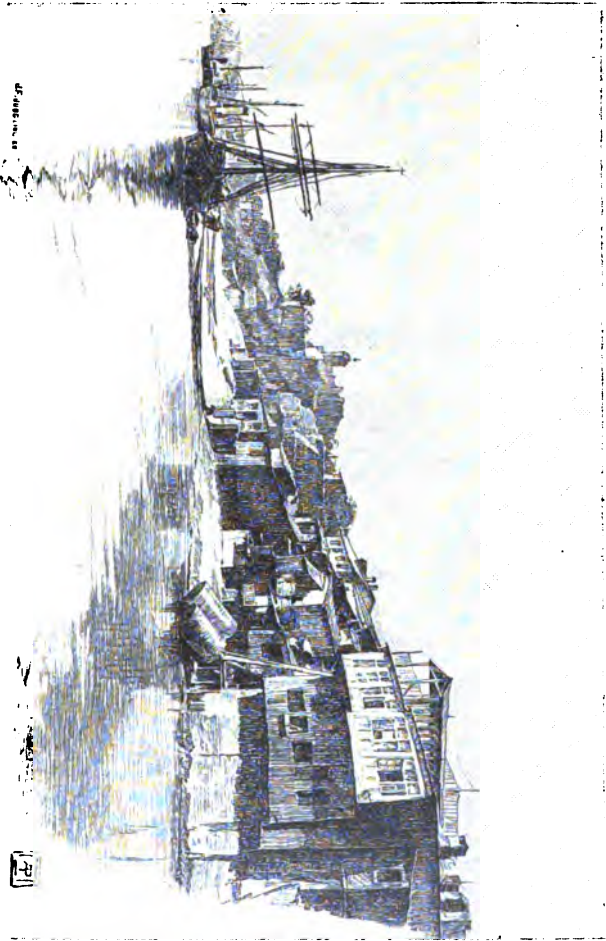


banians in fustinellas like ballet-dancers' skirts jostle Slovak raftsmen in their skin-tight woollen trousers; smart marines from the naval station at the upper part of the town haggle with peddlers of Turkish tobacco; and florid-faced cooks of English steamers shoulder their way to the meat-shops, regardless of Roumanian, Bulgarian, Russian, Greek, or Jew. In the outskirts of the town several large bands of gypsies camp on the hill-sides; for here, as in most other places in Roumania and Hungary, they are not allowed to occupy houses. Of all the specimens of this remarkable race we saw in our trip, those at Galatz were by far the most savage and repulsive in appearance. As we approached their squalid camp on the bare slope of a great hill, exposed to wind and sun, hundreds of half-clothed howling maniacs swooped down upon us, wildly gesticulating and shrieking for alms, tearing open their garments to show their emaciated bodies, and holding aloft naked children shivering in the cold breeze. Raven black hair falling over their faces in tangled masses half hid their small cunning eyes, and sun and dirt had given their skins the color and texture of long-tanned leather. Everything about them—clothes, blankets, and tents—was of the same suggestive brown hue, and this monotone was only relieved by gaudy trinkets in the matted tresses of the women and by an occasional ornamental knife handle in the girdle of the men. We were unable to endure for any length of time the filth of the camp and the proximity of the evil-looking, ill-smelling crowd, which at every moment became more and more difficult to avoid; and we soon retreated, followed for a long distance by a number of urchins, all limbs and rags, who turned somersaults in the dust and yelled frantically for money. We did not feel purified from the contact with these gypsies until we were seated again in the canoes and facing the brisk east wind on the broad reach below Galatz.

CHAPTER XIX



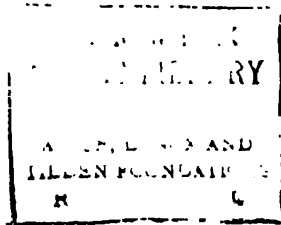
THE navigation of the Danube from Galatz to the mouth is controlled and regulated by an international commission, which was called into existence by the importance of the commerce with the corn-producing countries along the lower river. Forty-five miles below Galatz the river divides into two branches, the left-hand one, the Kilia arm, taking a general north-easterly course, with many turns and subdivisions, past the Russian towns of Ismail and Kilia, and, a short distance beyond the fishing-village of Vilkoff, flows into the Black Sea through seven narrow channels. The right-hand branch, actually the main stream, divides again ten miles below the first fork, the former running in a general easterly direction to the port of Sulina, on the Black Sea, and the latter arm winding sluggishly on towards the south-east under the extreme eastern spurs of the great range of Dobrudscha hills. Each side of the irregular equilateral triangle bounded by the Kilia and Saint George's arms and the sea-coast measures about fifty miles in a straight line, and the larger part of the tract thus enclosed is marsh and swamp-land, covered with a dense growth of tall reeds, interspersed with numerous lakes and cut up into countless islands by narrow lagoons. In the whole of this great delta there are only a few square miles of ground higher than the general level of the marsh, and these are two broad ranges of sand-dunes running north-east and south-west several miles inland, marking the line of



GALATZ

DE AGENCE N° 10





the ancient sea-coast when the waves and wind raised this barrier long before the memory of man. These sandy elevations are now covered with a forest of oak-trees, and support a sparse population. With this exception the delta is uncultivated, and the few natives who inhabit the great marsh are almost all engaged in fishing. They build themselves rude huts out of the tall reeds, make their beds, and even their net-floats, out of the same useful plant, and during the summer months set their nets in every lake and lagoon, preserving their catch in salt or carrying it at convenient times to the distant markets. This great waste is at all seasons most impressive, and in summer, when the reeds have grown to their full height and are in blossom, the landscape, although monotonous in the extreme, often has great elements of beauty. Narrow waterways, seldom more than a fathom broad, intersect the marsh in all directions, and only the natives who are familiar with the intricate windings of these thoroughfares can find their way from one point to another of this labyrinth. Some of these waterways are known to have existed in the period of Roman occupation, and the race of fishermen who now make use of them have preserved their type, their dress, their boats, and their implements practically unchanged since the time when Ovid was exiled to the shores of the Euxine. Myriads of wild-fowl breed in the solitude of the broad morass, and fish abound in its quiet waters. In the autumn, when the frost has killed the reeds, great tracts of the delta are often swept over by fires, consuming all the vegetation above the level of the mud, but clearing the way for a new and vigorous growth in the spring. Only during the winter months is the marsh passable for vehicles or even for pedestrians, and when the whole region is frozen hard the mails and the few passengers who are obliged to travel are carried on sledges straight across from one station to another over the level surface of land and water.



PEASANTS OF THE DELTA

Russia took possession of this region after the capture of Ismail, in the early part of the century, and, in order to help commerce at home, put various restrictions on the Danube trade, which almost annihilated it for a time. The adoption of free-trade by England naturally stimulated the export business in the corn-producing countries of the Danube, and great pressure was brought to bear to induce Russia to remove the hampering restrictions on the navigation of the river. International disputes arising from this cause finally culminated in the Crimean War, and it was not without reason, therefore, that the treaties of peace contained articles intended to place the navigation of the river in control of the countries most interested in the corn supply. One

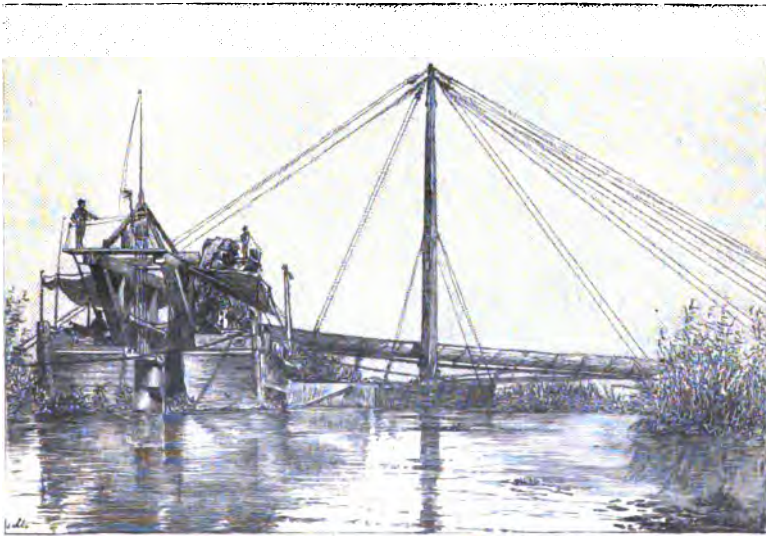
clause of the treaty created a riverian commission, whose duty was to regulate the general navigation of the river, and another clause established a European Commission of the Danube, "to clear the mouths of the river, as well as the neighboring parts of the sea, from the sand and other impediments which obstruct them." The first of these commissions found its task impossible on account of the conflicting interests of the small countries along the river, and has never done anything, although it is still recognized diplomatically. The Powers represented in the active commission are Great Britain, Austro-Hungary, France, Germany, Italy, Roumania, Russia, and Turkey. Owing to a misunderstanding of the nature of the work to be done, the commission was established for a term of only two years. This period was extended at various times, and at last it was settled by the Treaty of 1878 that the functions of this body should continue until it should be dissolved by the Powers. It has been constantly at work since its first meeting in 1856. A few statistics will give an idea of the effect on English trade of the improvements to navigation brought about by the commission. Before 1847 from 3 to 52 English vessels entered the Danube annually. Between 1847 and 1860, 2648 English ships entered the river, representing a net tonnage of 509,723. Between 1861 and 1889 these numbers were raised to 12,363 and 9,842,260 respectively. In 1861, 214 English sailing-vessels and 35 steamers came to the port of Sulina, and in 1889, 842 steamers and not a single sailing-vessel. In 1890 the total number of vessels of all nationalities entering the Danube was 1519, including many steamers of 1400 to 1600 tons. The commission began in 1860 to collect tolls to maintain the improvements, and in that year the revenue was 256,583 francs. In 1889 this sum was increased to 1,348,552 francs. British ships have paid from 71 to 82 per cent. of the whole dues levied during

the past ten years. The exports from the river consist chiefly of wheat, barley, and Indian-corn, but oats, rye, rape and linseed, petroleum, tallow, hides, salt fish, wines and spirits, cheese, lumber, and wool are also shipped in large quantities. Machinery, coal, bar and sheet iron, and articles of clothing form the bulk of the imports. In general terms, the work of the commission has consisted in the construction of groynes and revetments, straightening the river-banks, shortening the channel by cuttings, and dredging the shallow places. The whole delta has been surveyed, and accurate maps made. A great part of the Sulina arm has been canalized, and the channel deepened from 8 feet at extreme low-water to over 16 feet, or to 20½ feet at average low-water. Under the direction of Sir Charles A. Hartley, the consulting engineer of the commission, and the able supervision of Mr. Charles Kühl, since 1872 the resident engineer, the improvements are carried on with constant regularity and great energy, and every year the navigation of the Sulina branch becomes less difficult and dangerous. Vessels of 2000 tons may now steam up as far as Braila with perfect safety.

The longest cutting yet undertaken, which will shorten the channel by four and a quarter miles, is now in active progress, and the operation of cutting through the marsh is extremely interesting. Far out of sight of any human habitation the black funnel and grimy framework of an immense dredger are seen rising high above the waving mass of reeds which stretches away on every side as far as the eye can reach. A chain of steel-shod iron buckets working on a movable arm which projects in front of the dredger cuts its way through the spongy mass of which the marsh is composed, and the mixture of roots, mud, and shells is shot out upon the bank of the cutting through a long adjustable iron trough. There the material is worked by hand into a dike, strengthened by

the ingenious use of reeds and roots, and finally protected by a revetment of broken stone. This cutting will be five miles and a quarter in length, and 6,500,000 cubic yards will have to be dredged before the work is completed in 1895.

The headquarters of the commission are at Sulina, on the Black Sea. As early as the time of the Irish famine in 1847-48 hundreds of English sailing-vessels came to the Black Sea for grain. Most of them anchored in the mouth of the Sulina branch, discharged ballast there, and loaded with corn to supply the urgent demand for bread-stuffs at home. A squalid little settlement rapidly sprang up among the heaps of gravel deposited on the marshy banks, and as years went on the constantly accumulating ballast was spread farther and farther up along the stream, and inland over the morass, and streets and houses followed the ex-



DREDGING IN THE DELTA

panding area of solid ground. The establishment of the European Commission of the Danube gave a fresh impulse to the growing place, and a busy commercial town soon covered the deposit of ballast, having its foundations, literally, on English soil. Commodious offices, large warehouses, and repair-shops were built; churches were erected by fol-



TURKISH SAILING LOTKA, SULINA

lowers of various creeds; a life-saving station was established; a fine stone quay was constructed on the south bank of the stream; and two jetties with light-houses were pushed far out into the shallow waters of the Black Sea. Few travellers ever visit Sulina, because the passenger boats usually touch there in the night. Its cosmopolitan character and its peculiar situation in the marsh make it an interesting spot. Types of a score of nationalities may be studied on its quay, and there is a great deal of picturesqueness, of a squalid order to be sure, in its narrow streets.

No long walks or drives are possible, for the wilderness of reeds crowds up to the very back doors of the town, but there is a unique fascination in its isolated position, and a special charm in the character of its surroundings.

We made up our minds long before reaching Braila that we would follow the most northerly arm of the delta, both because it marks the frontier between Roumania and Russia, and would consequently let us have a glimpse of the latter country, and also because that branch is not navigable by large craft, and we would escape steamers and tourists, and really see something of native life. The busy, bustling port of Braila, where English is heard at every step, and the river is almost blocked by great iron grain steamers, gave us an indication of what we might expect between that point and the Black Sea, and we determined to escape if possible all these signs of civilization and enterprise, and steal out to the sea-coast through a comparatively deserted channel. How we carried out this plan will soon be related, and I have alluded to the work of the Danube Commission, and described Sulina, because we visited the one and investigated the other on our way back from the real goal of our journey.

We set out from Galatz late one windy afternoon, and camped for the night on a low sandy flat nearly opposite the River Pruth, which forms the boundary between Roumania and Russia, planning to make a fair start by day-



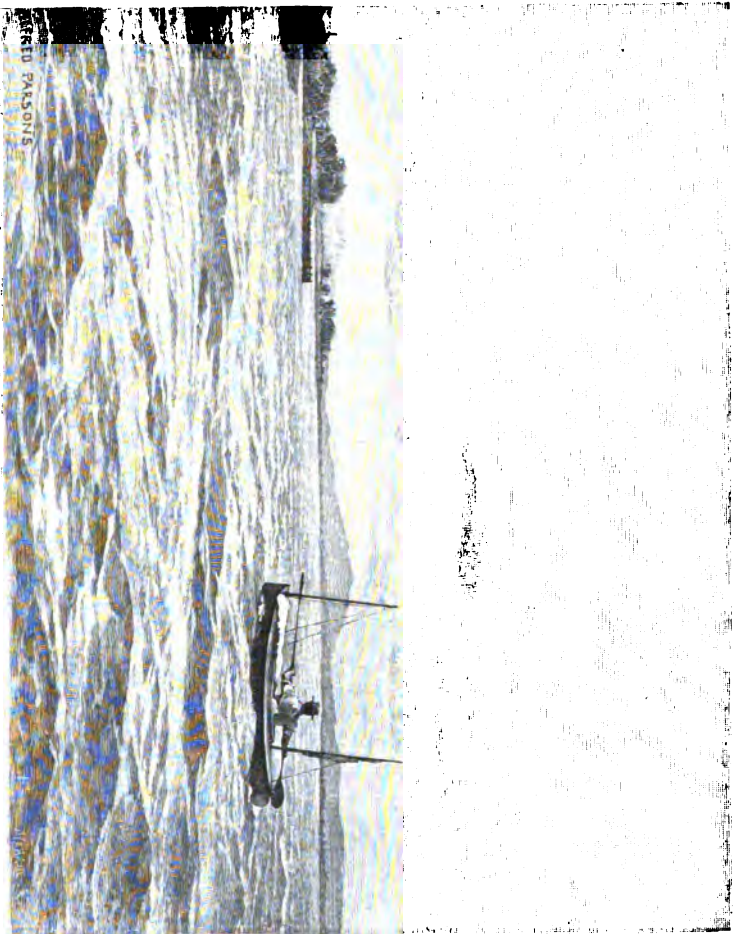
HILLS NEAR MATCHIN

break into the territory of the Czar. A banker friend in Galatz had strongly advised us not to attempt the voyage to the Black Sea by way of the Kilia arm, insisting that the Russian Custom-house regulations were extremely rigorous, and that we would probably be prohibited from landing anywhere along that shore, while the Roumanian bank was marshy and deserted, and did not offer any possible camping places. We had no desire to make the acquaintance of any more autocratic system than that with which we had become unwillingly intimate, but the advice of our friend did not deter us from carrying out our plan, and we profited by his warnings so far as to lay in three or four days' store of provisions in case we should be obliged to defy both Russia and Roumania, and paddle down mid-channel to the Black Sea without touching land on either side. We were rather late in getting afloat the next morning, for the wind had risen to a gale in the night, and had

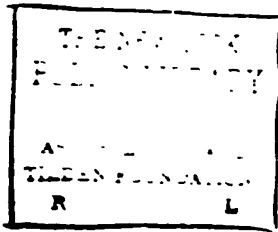


KILIA

drifted the fine sand over everything, half burying the boats, and penetrating every crevice and cranny in them. This added a great deal to the labor of packing up, and the only way we succeeded in getting rid of this nuisance was by carrying everything down close to the water's edge where the sand was wet and hard. The Pruth is a narrow, deep stream winding under the western slopes of a range of low hills which divert the course of the Danube sharply from



CHATAL SAINT GEORGIS



the north-east to the south-east at this point. The first Russian town, Reni, with its turnip-shaped church-spires and ugly warehouses, stands on a high bluff overlooking this bend of the river, and offers nothing of interest, not even at the water-front, where there is little or no activity,



TOULTCHA

and few craft of any kind. The hills abruptly recede again just below the town limits, and the river sweeps majestically round towards the east, and takes an almost straight course to the first branching in the delta. Both shores are now quite flat and well cultivated, and on either side frequent picket stations are the only houses in sight. To the south and east, across a narrow strip of meadow land, the great hills of the Dobrudscha, dotted with ancient tumuli, extend far into the distance, where a range of mountains cuts sharply against the sky with bold, jagged outlines; to the north, the irregular base spurs of the line of low hills which touch the river at Reni are seen jutting out over the great marsh at intervals until they vanish in the perspective. The wind veered round in the middle of the forenoon and almost died away, and as we alternately sailed and paddled down the long straight reach towards the delta, past the red-roofed town of Isaktcha on the Roumanian shore,

half hidden behind a wooded island, and the great Russian monastery of Saint Theraspont across the river, we heard not so much as a single hail from the soldiers on either bank, although we often passed close to their stations. In the early afternoon we saw before us a stone jetty with a spindle on the end, and soon found that this marked the place where the river divides and the delta actually begins, forty-five miles below Galatz. The fork is known as the Chatal d'Ismail, and the embankment was built by the Danube Commission to divert the strength of the current from the Kilia arm into the main stream. Three or four miles to the south the white houses of Toultscha shone brightly among the dark green foliage of the trees, and



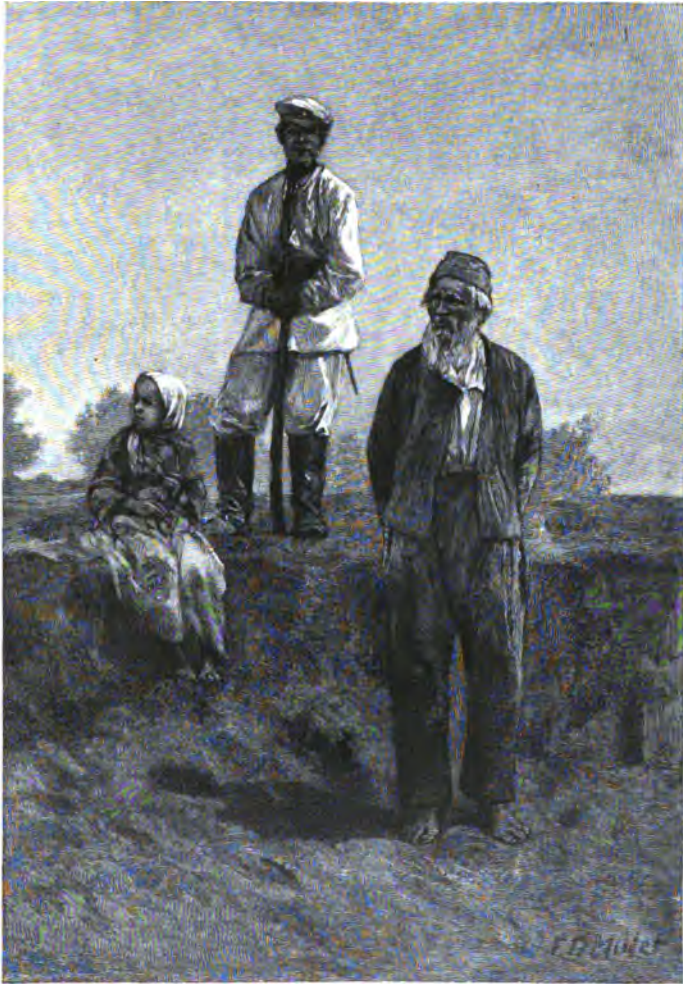
WINDMILLS OF TOULTCHA

numerous windmills were waving their arms on the rocky promontory below the town. A half-dozen miles farther to the eastward is the Chatal Saint George, where the stream divides into the Sulina and the Saint George arms.

CHAPTER XX

WE did not hesitate to follow the left-hand branch at the Chatal d'Ismail, and, rounding the sharp bend to the north, we soon entered a great wilderness of reeds and willows. For some distance not even a picket station was visible on either shore, but as we paddled steadily along in the sluggish current we occasionally saw a Russian soldier in white uniform in the dense undergrowth among the willows. In a little more than an hour's time we came in sight of Ismail, picturesquely situated on a gentle slope of ground beyond pleasant meadows, where the ruins of a great Turkish fortress stand. Great cultivated fields on the same side of the river, where scores of peasants were at work, stretched far back to the distant hill-sides, yellow with cornfields and dotted with villages. A large Russian picket station on an open point tempted us to land and see what would happen, so we ran the bows of the canoes into the mud and asked the soldiers assembled on the bank for a light for our cigarettes, at the same time preparing to go ashore. One of them went to the quarters for a live coal, while the others helped us out of the canoes in a very friendly manner, and we spent a sociable hour with them. We did not hurry away, because we planned to camp just above Ismail, and it was nearly sunset when we floated away towards the glittering domes rising above the dense masses of willow-trees in the distance. The peasants rattled across the

fields in their farm-wagons, leaving behind them a cloud of dust all golden in the evening light. A mounted officer cantered along the bank, paused a moment to look at us, gave a sharp command to a sentinel, and went on again. Now we noticed that a soldier was stationed at every furlong of the shore, and we began to be anxious about finding a secluded camp-ground. The Roumanian side was absolutely impossible, for the mud was not only of the blackest and most adhesive variety, but it extended so far out into the river that it was quite out of the question to try to effect a landing. We kept to that bank, however, examining every foot of ground at the water's edge, until we came to the corner of the last bend above Ismail. It was not possible to camp at this place, and if we went farther we should have to pass the town, a proceeding which might result in our being delayed there for the night. After some hesitation we made up our minds to paddle across the stream to a gravelly beach under a meadow bordered by a row of willows, and to land there in face of the sentinel whom we saw pacing to and fro. The soldier challenged us as we came near, and we answered that we were travelers and wanted to camp there for the night. A corporal speedily came up, and one of us, taking the passports, accompanied him to the officers' quarters, a half-mile or so across the fields. Our position was soon explained to the satisfaction of the lieutenant, who, although not a particularly intelligent specimen of the officers of the line, readily comprehended the fact that we had no hostile intentions, and ordered the corporal to see that we were not molested in our camp, and to send us for our passports in the morning. In a few minutes we had our camp in order, built a fire, and cooked our dinner, all to the great entertainment of the soldier on guard, who watched every operation with the most intense interest. Before we had finished eating, a



RUSSIAN PICKET POST

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number of officers came down from their quarters to look at our canoes, and when, a few minutes later, they saw us getting ready for bed, politely wished us good-night, and went away. Our bivouac was not far from a country road, and every passer met a prompt challenge from the soldier, who never deserted our fire except to perform this duty. Feeling very much as if we were within the lines of an army in war-time, we retired into the shelter of our tents and left the soldier, to whisper to himself and utter mournful sighs by the few remaining coals. Some time in the night he was relieved, and the new sentinel withdrew into the cover of the willow-trees, and did not disturb us in any way. In the early morning a boat-load of natives rowing up-stream past our camp was immediately challenged by the guard, and ordered to come ashore. One of the men landed and carried the passports up to the officers for the regulation *visé* before the boat was allowed to proceed. We then appreciated the fact that we were not treated any differently from the inhabitants themselves, but that, as far as the Custom-house regulations went, the river-bank was practically in a state of siege.

A hospitable-looking bath-house moored near the landing offered us a familiar refuge at Ismail, and we innocently put in there and prepared to go ashore. Before we had left the canoes, however, a fussy Custom-house guard with a short sword by his side came hurrying up, and peremptorily ordered us to cast off our painters and to land on a little beach about fifteen yards farther down-stream. We assured him we had the permission of the bath-house keeper to moor our canoes where we were, but he failed to see any point in this remark, and the more we demurred the more aggressive he became. Reinforcements now began to arrive and we thought best to yield, and consequently went ashore at the spot indicated. Just above, on the

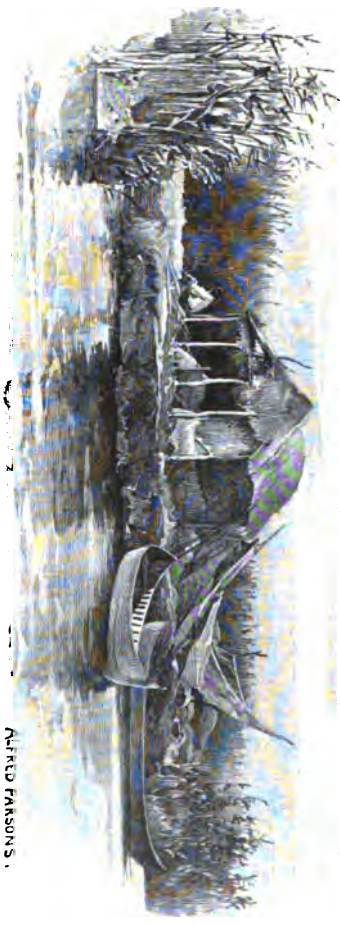
bank, was a rambling wooden structure, offensively ornamental in style, somewhat resembling a sea-side villa. We were conducted into this building by our fuming guard and found it was the Custom-house of the port, although there was no sign nor flag to suggest this fact. Entering a small room, our passports were examined and stamped by a courteous official and given back to us again. Understanding that we were now free to go into the town, we returned to the canoes, took them up to the bath-house again, and, carrying our sketching materials, started to walk out through the enclosure in which the Custom-house was situated. We were not allowed to pass with our sketch-bags, and were conducted to the Custom-house to have them examined. Of course nothing dutiable was discovered in them, but we were told that we would not be allowed to carry them into the town until the chief of the customs had given us permission, and he was not expected at the office for an hour or more. There was nothing left for us but to wander off up the long street to see if there was anything worth sketching. It was an extremely hot day and the streets were dusty, unshaded by trees, and often almost impassable by reason of deep gullies and broken culverts. The town is laid out in rectangles, and most of the houses are long and low, and built of bricks or mud plastered on the outside; a few of them, however, are made of unpainted, skilfully-hewn logs. There are several large buildings on one side of the vast, empty square opposite the great white church with several green domes which rises high above the stunted trees and adjacent houses, but with these exceptions the street architecture, as far as we saw it, is of the plainest and least attractive kind.

When we returned to the Custom-house one of the clerks, who had been educated in St. Petersburg, spoke French, and was an amateur artist, presented us to the head official,

who rather curtly informed us that we must of course get the *visé* of the chief of police on our passports before we were allowed to sketch or even carry our materials into the town. The obstacles put in the way of our pursuit of art stimulated us to continue our efforts to overcome them, especially after the communicative young official above mentioned assured us that he had to have his passport *visé* by the police before he was allowed to sketch. So we tramped through the heat and dust a mile or more to the police-station, produced our passports, and asked for the necessary *visé*. None of the high officials were there at the time and a young Moldavian clerk, much inflated by the proud consciousness of his temporary authority, received our request with sneers and scoffing. We did not stop to consider that perhaps our dress and general appearance might not strike him as characteristic of professional men, but, very much vexed at his impertinence and annoyed that he did not even take the trouble to open our passports, we made use of some emphatic expressions in common use among the Russians. Thereupon the clerk grew livid with sudden wrath, and pointing to a cheap lithograph of the Czar hanging over the desk, shouted in angry tones that we had insulted his majesty by using strong language in his presence. The soldier-policeman who stood on guard in the little office at once took the cue from the clerk and added his torrent to the rising flood of abuse. They both worked themselves into such a state of frantic passion that for a brief moment it looked as if we were going to have immediate war. All our efforts to pacify them were in vain, and while they were yet raging and threatening to have our gore we seized our passports and escaped. We related the incident at the Custom-house, and the officials there begged us to go to the residence of the chief of police and report the conduct of the clerk, saying it was no uncommon be-

havior among the Moldavians who are in the employ of the Government, and declaring it would be a public benefit to teach them a lesson. But we thought the game was scarcely worth the loss of the whole afternoon, and after having our passports ornamented with a second stamp giving us permission to depart, went away richer only in experience.

If these accounts of our troubles with Custom-house officials and the military give an impression that such experiences seriously interfered with the enjoyment of our trip, a false idea has certainly been conveyed. We were annoyed at times, it must be confessed, but whenever we paused to reflect, we remembered that we took no chances in our favor. We were travelling between two frontiers rigorously guarded and vigilantly watched to prevent smuggling, and whenever we went ashore made no effort to appear in the character of tourists, but with our stained garments, weather-beaten hats, and ragged boating-shoes exposed ourselves to the same delays, inconveniences, and discourteous treatment which the inhabitants themselves suffer in their dealings with the official class, not only in this but in many other parts of Europe. It is undoubtedly true that if we had landed at Ismail in smart yachting uniform, or perhaps even with a coat on, we should have had little or no difficulty with any one from the fussy autocrat at the landing to the bantam clerk at the police headquarters. Indeed, after all was said and done, we had experienced, even in these last few days, no greater annoyance than we had endured at the frontier of Germany on our way to Donaueschingen, where our baggage, part of it being of unusual shape, was examined with great deliberation and minute curiosity, and we were at last obliged to pay sixteen pfennigs duty on two tins of cocoatina and a pot of vaseline, the only canoe stores we had with us. Whatever disagreeable happened in our visits to the towns we always speedily



FISHING-HUT AMONG THE REEDS

ALFRED FAHNSON.

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forgot when we reached camp, for there we were generally quite free and undisturbed and, moreover, exceedingly comfortable. We travelled from the very start on the principle that we could see more and work better if we treated ourselves well, and we therefore scorned neither comforts nor luxuries, made every reasonable effort to have regular meals and a varied bill of fare, and never, under any circumstances, neglected to keep our outfit clean and in good order. This may sound as if our out-of-door life was not what is usually called "roughing it," and it certainly was not, if we accept the common definition of the term as qualifying the experiences of the raw recruit, the apprentice sailor, and the amateur camper. We found the maxim of the best men in the hunting-field: "When the hounds are not running, never take a fence unless you are obliged to," applied equally well to our excursion, and we therefore never roughed it unless we were compelled to do so by circumstances. In the whole extent of our trip, among all the novel scenes and the unique and interesting experiences, every incident of our camp life remains perfectly fresh in our memory.

After a short paddle down a pleasant reach under perpendicular bluffs on the Russian shore, past frequent irrigating machines ingeniously constructed to lift the water upon the high plateau, we came out into a perfectly flat country partly wooded on either side. The strong north-east wind which had been blowing almost continuously for days gave us no rest, and raised a choppy sea which seriously checked our speed. About ten miles below Ismail the river divides into three parts, which join into one stream at Kilia fifteen miles farther on. We planned to camp somewhere above the latter town, and chose the central passage as probably the most direct one. For the rest of the afternoon we worked steadily, expecting to come in sight of Kilia long

before sunset. A swampy wilderness surrounded us, and not a yard of solid earth did we see. The frontier runs along the northerly limit of the delta on the banks of the smallest of the three lesser arms just described, and we therefore did not even have the company of the picket stations. Indeed, the only human habitations we came across were at a fishing-camp, where several rude huts were scattered about among the reeds and willows, their mud-floors scarcely a foot above the level of the water. It began to rain, and heavy storm-clouds, driven by the rising gale, swept over the whole sky. The sun went down and we had left the region of willows, and now saw nothing but reeds on all sides of us. Soon the gathering twilight drove us to seek a camp, although the domes of Kilia were not yet in sight. The only place we could find after a long search was a small clearing among the reeds on the left bank, where some fisherman had dried the stalks for floats to his nets. Here we hauled up the canoes, settled them firmly in the soft mud of the marsh, bow to bow, at an angle with each other, and, spreading a thick layer of freshly-cut reeds over the triangular space between the canoes and the edge of the bank, put up our tents and built a fire. The latter operation was not so easy as it sounds, for all the wood we could find was the water-soaked branches of willow which we broke from the snags or pulled out of the ooze of the banks. We were, however, prepared for just such an emergency and, lighting an ordinary little wire-gauze spirit-lamp, arranged the smallest twigs over the frame so they soon dried, then caught fire, and by their heat dried others, until we shortly had enough strength of flame to kindle the large pieces of sodden wood. Sheltered from the rain by our sketching umbrellas in the lee of the canoe tents, we cooked an elaborate dinner of several courses, and enjoyed as comfortable a meal as if our camp had been made on



A LATE CAMP

the sound turf of an English meadow. As for our snug beds, they were quite as dry and warm as at any other bivouac, notwithstanding the fact that the canoes were lying in a slough of black mire.

A prolonged struggle with the mud the next morning did not increase our courage to face the strong head-wind, but we got away at last fairly free from the stains which defiled clothes, sails, and varnish, and after a short paddle came out into the main stream which here runs towards the south-east for a short distance, and were soon scudding past the town of Kilia under full sail. The town stretches

far inland among groves of trees, and we could see the green-topped domes of several churches and the roofs of large houses. The water-front was by no means inviting, with its ugly sheds and dilapidated landing-stages, and, moreover, there was such an active running to and fro among the soldiers near a battery on the point that we concluded it was best not to land, but to dash boldly past not only this military post but the Roumanian one of Staroi-Kilia opposite, and try to reach the Black Sea before sunset. We were hailed as we went along, and the marines on a small Russian cruiser looked with astonishment at our flags straightened out by the breeze, but we did not alter our course nor start a sheet until we were obliged to take to our paddles again at the next bend.

After our first introduction to real mud just below Belgrade, we had always looked forward to an ideal bivouac on a clean sandy beach on the shores of the Black Sea, where we should find drift-wood in abundance, firm smooth ground under our feet, and pure sweet air to breathe. We felt a certain elation, then, as we passed Kilia and saw before us a great flat, unbroken reed-covered marsh, in the belief that within a few hours we should probably reach this ideal camp and bid good-bye to Danube mud and its accompanying annoyances. We stole along in the shelter of a fringe of large willows on the Russian bank for about five miles. Through the trees we could see great vineyards and cultivated fields and occasional farm-houses. Peasants were at work repairing the low dikes that protect the farms from the overflow of the river, or weaving fresh rods in the wattled fences. We occasionally checked our speed to watch these operations, and if we had attempted to land would probably have been met with a prompt challenge, for all along at regular intervals the white uniforms of the sentinels could be distinguished among the undergrowth, and




MOLDAVIAN PEASANTS—A WINDY DAY IN THE DELTA

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the glint of bayonets often flashed in the foliage. At the end of this reach the river broadens out to a width of a mile or more, but only for a short distance, and then divides around a perfect maze of islands with no marks anywhere to indicate the best passage. According to our map, which for this part of the river was very inaccurate and almost useless, the northern arm along the frontier would be scarcely navigable, and, withal, much the longest route. Noticing the roof of a small house among the reeds just after we had entered the middle branch, we stopped to inquire the way and to find out the distance. The whole peasant family trooped down to greet us, and took the friendliest interest in the canoes and in the journey we were making. The boys ran and gathered melons which they forced upon us, and the father gave us most accurate directions for our navigation, much too intricate and detailed to be remembered, and told us it was about forty versts (twenty-five miles) to the sea.

CHAPTER XXI

OR the next two hours we paddled steadily between banks covered with tall reeds, waving and rustling in the wind, occasionally startling broods of young ducks out of their hiding-places, but seeing no other living thing. About noon we came out into a stream at right angles with the one we had followed, and seeing the familiar figure of a Russian soldier among the willows, knew we were on the right road. In a few minutes more we saw a row of white sand-dunes glistening in the sun beyond grassy meadows, and to the right and below the green domes of two churches. Rounding a low point we were shortly off the village of Vilkoﬀ, the last settlement on the Kilia arm. Very little of the place was visible from the river as we came down, for it extends some distance back, and only the roofs of two large fish warehouses and a few fishermen's huts are seen among the trees near the river. There was no landing-place, and not even a boat along the shore, so we pushed on against the wind, now blowing a gale, and shortly came to the mouth of a narrow inlet, forming the tiny harbor of the place. Along both sides of this passage we saw, jumbled together in confusion, many rambling wooden structures, quite like those at any remote fishing village in New England, and a fleet of boats, large and small, moored to rotting, neglected landing-stages. We grounded once or twice on a mud-bank on our way into the harbor, but presently were in sheltered waters,



VILKOFF

and, following the directions of some fishermen, came alongside the steps in front of a low white building which we found was the Custom-house. With the exception of the lotkas, or native boats, all our surroundings, from the unpainted shanties and the shaky wharves to the rough boots and tarpaulins of the fishermen, suggested Cape Ann or Cape Cod; but the appearance on the quay of a very short and stout official with an extraordinary bottle nose and wearing the Russian uniform, located the place instantly.

This official was the most astonished man ever seen; his eyes fairly started out of their orbits; he looked first at us, then at the canoes, and then at the Stars and Stripes and Union-jack flying from the masts, but seemed too much dazed to utter a word. At last he opened his mouth and asked, with a tremor in his speech:

“Why are you landing here?”

“The wind is so heavy we can’t go on,” we replied.

“What’s your business?”

We explained to the best of our ability, not forgetting to

mention the profession of civil engineer we had adopted up the river.

"But you had better not land here!" he urged.

"We must land; we can't go on until the wind drops."

"You certainly can't stay here, for there is no hotel, and you won't be able to get anything to eat."

"We don't want a hotel and we have food in our boats."

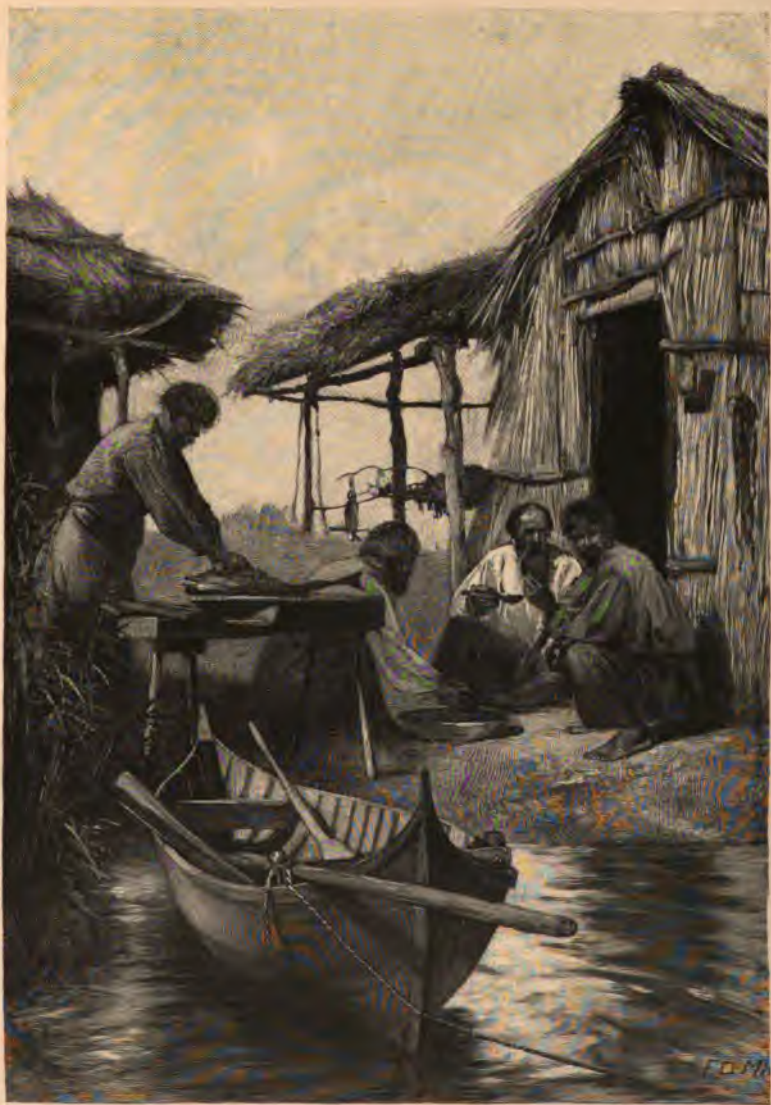
"What did you come here for?"

We explained again that we were travelling to see the country.

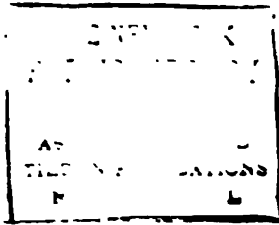
"There is nothing to see here, and you had better not stop."

"But," we insisted, becoming a little weary of his obstinate and stupid repetitions, "we can't possibly go on until the wind moderates, and, furthermore, we don't propose to try. Here are our passports, *visés* by the representative of his Imperial Majesty, the Czar."

The sight of two large documents, quite unlike anything called passports he had ever before seen, only added to his distress, and he looked at them with much the expression of a man who sees the warrant for his arrest in the hands of a sheriff. At this juncture two young men came up, introduced themselves to us as fish merchants of the place, interceded in our behalf, and succeeded in calming the old man's excitement so that he looked at the *visés* on our passports and told us to come ashore. After further discussion he consented to register and stamp our papers, but refused to give them back to us, saying we could have them again when we went away. All the arguments we could invent were eloquently used in the hope of persuading him to permit us to land our sketching materials, and our two young allies, who had been educated in Odessa and understood our position, joined their voices to ours, but all in vain. Not an article must be removed from the canoes—not even



FISHING STATION ON THE BLACK SEA



a sketch-book—and, furthermore, we must promise not to sketch anything before we would be allowed to go into the village. Seeing the place even with this restriction was better than dangling our heels from the edge of the quay all the afternoon, and we accepted the invitation of one of the fish merchants to drink tea with him, and strolled off into the village.

The houses are low and solidly built, and most of them have one peculiar feature—a row of columns in front, supporting a projection of the roof. They stand closely together along straight thoroughfares which are little better than canals of mud, being only a few inches above the level of the river. The foundations of the houses are raised a foot or two above these sloughs, and roughly-hewn plank sidewalks, supported by piles, extend everywhere in front of the buildings, even into the narrow side alleys where fishermen's huts are huddled together in the marsh among reeds and willows. Two great white churches, enclosed by neat palings, occupy the middle of wide, neglected squares, and look bleak and bare and uninviting. The house we visited was of one story, but long and deep, and was comfortably, even luxuriously, furnished. The drawing-room, where we took unlimited tea and sweets, after the Russian custom, might have been in Vienna or Bucharest, with its parquet floor and ornate furniture.

The young merchants, who frankly told us they were Hebrews, although their type of face did not betray this fact, gave us detailed information about the village, the life there, the character of the people, and the extent of the fish business. From them we learned that Vil koff counts about 4000 inhabitants, of whom at least 1500 follow the hazardous occupation of fishing for sturgeon in the Black Sea. Five merchants, all of them Jews, divide the trade in fish and caviar between them, and practically own the place and

also the people, body and soul. Each trader has his contingent of 300 or more fishermen, whom he supplies with their outfit, all the necessities of life and unlimited vodka, all on the credit system, and takes as payment the entire product of their toil. The natural consequence of this system is that the poor wretches of fishermen are always deeply in debt to the merchants, and pass their whole lives in as degrading a state of slavery as ever was endured by man. The only relief they have from the tyranny of their masters and the hardships of the occupation they follow is all too frequent indulgence in the oblivion of inebriety. Our hosts did not think there was anything extraordinary in our experience with the Custom-house officials, and seemed to think that, considering the fact that no stranger had ever landed at Vilkoff within their memory, we had got on very well there. One of them related an incident which perfectly illustrates the unreasonable severity of the customs regulations as they are carried out in this part of the Danube. On one occasion he came down from Kilia with a lotka loaded with fishermen's supplies and was detained by head-winds, so he did not arrive until after the Custom-house officials had gone home for the night. The guard on the quay, who had known him from childhood, not only prohibited him from landing his cargo, but would not allow him to go ashore himself. He was therefore obliged to sit in the boat fighting mosquitoes all night long, and wait until nine o'clock in the morning before he could get his passport stamped, so that he could land and go home. This, he assured us, was no unusual adventure, and it is a recognized fact that when the head officer of the Custom-house is at his meals or is taking a nap, the whole business of the port is temporarily suspended. Of course this would hardly be the case if Vilkoff were on any route of travel. But this far-off settlement is not within two days' drive of a



ROUMANIAN SAILORS AT THE "CORDON"

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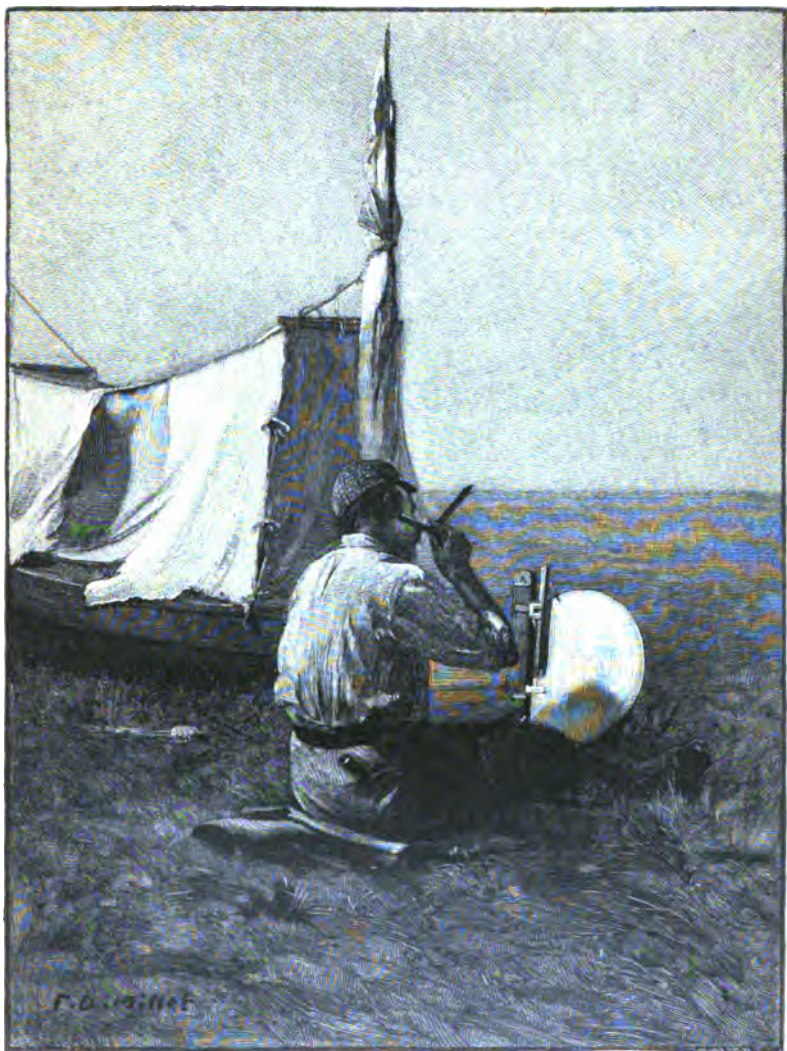
railway, and no steamer ever comes through the Kilia arm, because the numerous channels into which it divides at Vilkoff are all of them shallow, and only navigable by small fishing-boats.

The sturgeon is chiefly valuable for the roe or caviar which is found in it, but the meat finds ready sale, fresh or pickled. In sturgeon fishing the men employ long strings of large hooks without barbs, suspended by stout cords a yard long from a rope strung with cork floats. These hooks are not baited, but are hung very closely together, so that when the fish is swimming near the surface, as he usually does, he runs against them, and entangling himself by the violence of his struggles is easily captured. We saw a medium-sized fish brought to the warehouse at Vilkoff, where the caviar was extracted. There was just about enough to fill an ordinary bucket, and the trader told us it was worth on the spot about 160 francs. The roe is held together by a net-work of delicate fibres and a gelatinous substance not unlike thin starch in appearance. The eggs are separated from this envelope by carefully rubbing them through a coarse sieve, and the caviar is then ready for the table. The extremely delicate nature of caviar will not permit of its transportation unless it is preserved in some way, and it is usually put on the market in small quantities salted, or in bulk salted and pressed. There is as much difference between the flavor of the fresh and the salted caviar as there is between ripe and dried figs, or between grapes and raisins. The amateur of this delicacy really enjoys it only within twenty-four hours after it is taken from the fish.

The afternoon was fast passing and we were getting impatient to be off when, luckily, at about four o'clock the violence of the gale diminished somewhat, and we at once prepared to start. A ludicrous expression of relief came over the old man's face when we asked for our passports

and told him we were going away. He became cheerful and amiable, and confided in us, as we bade him good-bye, that he was a Pole, and had been in the service of the Government for over forty years, and was very much afraid he would have lost his place if he had permitted us to pass the night in the village. We had a paddle of ten miles before us, and about two hours of daylight to do it in, and we set off in good spirits, looking forward with agreeable anticipations to our camp on the sea-shore. Soon after leaving Vilkoff we entered a maze of channels among low islands, where our horizon was limited by the rank of tall reeds along the shores. We met several lotkas with fishermen paddling up to the village from their summer huts near the sea-coast, and a large patrol-boat full of Roumanian soldiers near a large picket station, and, judging from these indications that we were in the right passage, we paddled steadily on.

In an hour and a half the stream curved round to the south-east, and we were enabled to take advantage of the wind and hoisted sail at once. Just as the sun was setting we came into a short reach, scarcely wider than the Danube at Donaueschingen, and there, in front of us, was the straight line of the sea-horizon stretching across between two low, reed-covered points. In a few moments more we sailed out gayly into the Black Sea. The broad open expanse of the sea was before us, all yellow and glowing with the reflection of the gorgeous sunset sky, and the light on the jetty at Sulina glimmered brightly in the distance. But we could see neither beach nor sand-dunes, and for a long distance in front of us and on either side, as far as we could distinguish in the dim light, stumps of trees, ugly snags, and bunches of reeds were sticking up out of the water. No possible camp-ground was visible anywhere, and for a moment we scarcely knew what to do or which way to turn



THE LAST TOILET IN CAMP



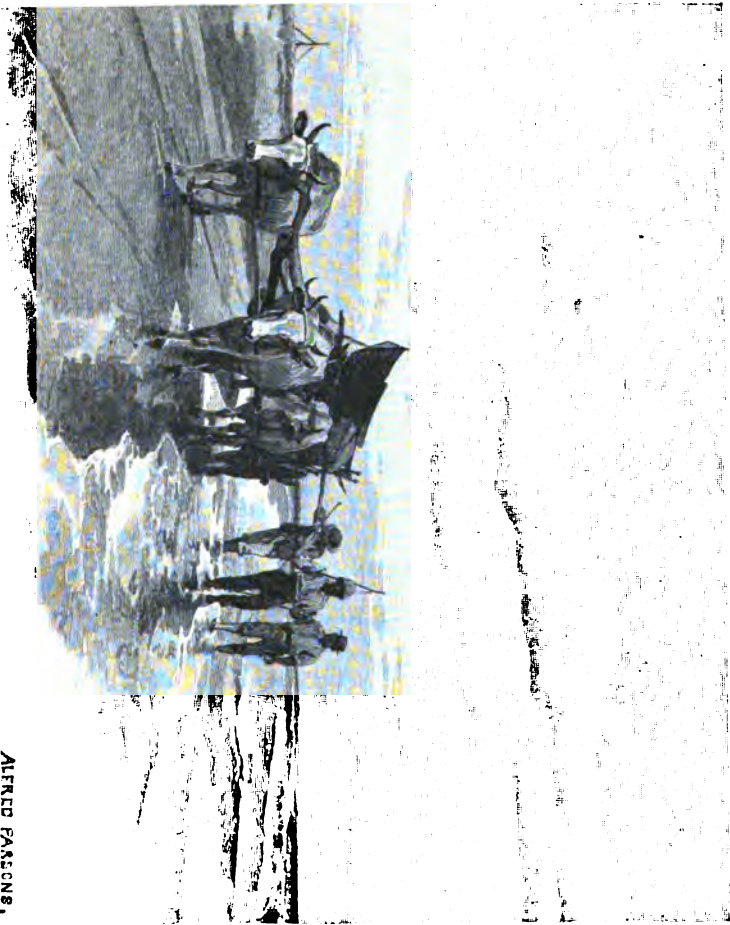
our bows. The wind had risen again at sunset, the shallow water grew rougher and rougher every moment, and delay was fatal unless we chose to pass the night moored to a snag, or in the shelter of the reeds on the shore. At first we thought of taking refuge at one of the fishermen's huts among the reeds at the mouth of the passage, but, discovering a white building far across the bay in the direction of Sulina, we headed our canoes for that, knowing we should find solid earth there, and paddled harder than we had done since we shot the rapids at the Iron Gates. Drenched with spray from the high cross-seas, we finally reached the other shore just as darkness was shutting down, and, pushing through a great bed of reeds, came out into a little muddy pool, with a landing made of logs close by the little white-washed house we had seen from a distance. A half-dozen sailors of the Roumanian navy welcomed us heartily as we landed, insisted on carrying up our canoes and luggage, and helped us pitch our camp on a dry sandy spot near their quarters. It was the evening of the 9th of September, and the journey from the Black Forest to the Black Sea had occupied us eleven weeks and one day, including twenty-eight days we had spent in excursions away from the river and our delays at Vienna, Hainburg, and Budapest. We had paddled and sailed 1775 miles through Germany, Austria, Hungary, Servia, Bulgaria, Roumania, and Russia.

The following morning we were on our feet at dawn, eager to see what sort of country we had reached in the darkness. We found that we were at the "cordon," or one of the Roumanian customs picket posts, on a point of land called Cape Masoura, and that we had come out into the Black Sea through that branch of the river called the Zaliv. The bay we had crossed in the twilight was an ancient mouth of the river, not navigable within the memory of man. Our camp was on the edge of a broad, rough meadow,

bordered on the north by great shallows where the sea is eating into the land, and extending for miles to the southward, where a range of sand-dunes hides Sulina from view, and to the west towards dark masses of the great forest on a low, sandy elevation which marks the line of the ancient sea-coast. The whole tract as far as we could see was gay with wild-flowers. In Alfred Parsons' note-book are enumerated among the plants found on this sandy flat, sea-lavender (*Stalice latifolia*), small Michaelmas daisy, just coming into blossom, large-leaved meconopsis, mauve lactuca, and several yellow composite flowers. In the lakes of the delta among the reeds he found water-lilies, villarsia, frogbit, a floating plant like a yucca, with thorny edges to the leaves, a sort of duck-weed with rough primate leaves, and on the river-banks, loosestrife, hemp, agrimony, flowering rush, and a thick undergrowth of marsh fern.

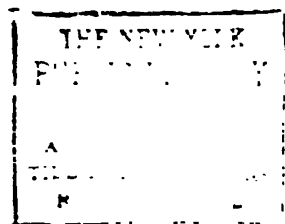
We cooked a most elaborate breakfast, made our farewell camp toilet before the nickle-plated rudder which served us as a mirror, and then parted with everything but our raiment among the sailors, who had been interested but shy spectators of all these operations. The wind was blowing half a gale, but with plenty of daylight before us we had no hesitation in tempting the dangers of the Black Sea, and about the middle of the forenoon left the cheery company happy in the possession of all our pots and pans, and set out in the direction of Sulina. The sailors assured us that we would not be able for several days to enter the river on account of the breakers running at the bar, but we proposed to skirt the coast as far as we could go, and then see what would turn up.

We worked our way out of the tangle of reeds and across the shallows into the open water and turned our bows to the southward, where a long sand-beach stretched away in a graceful curve. A double line of breakers followed the

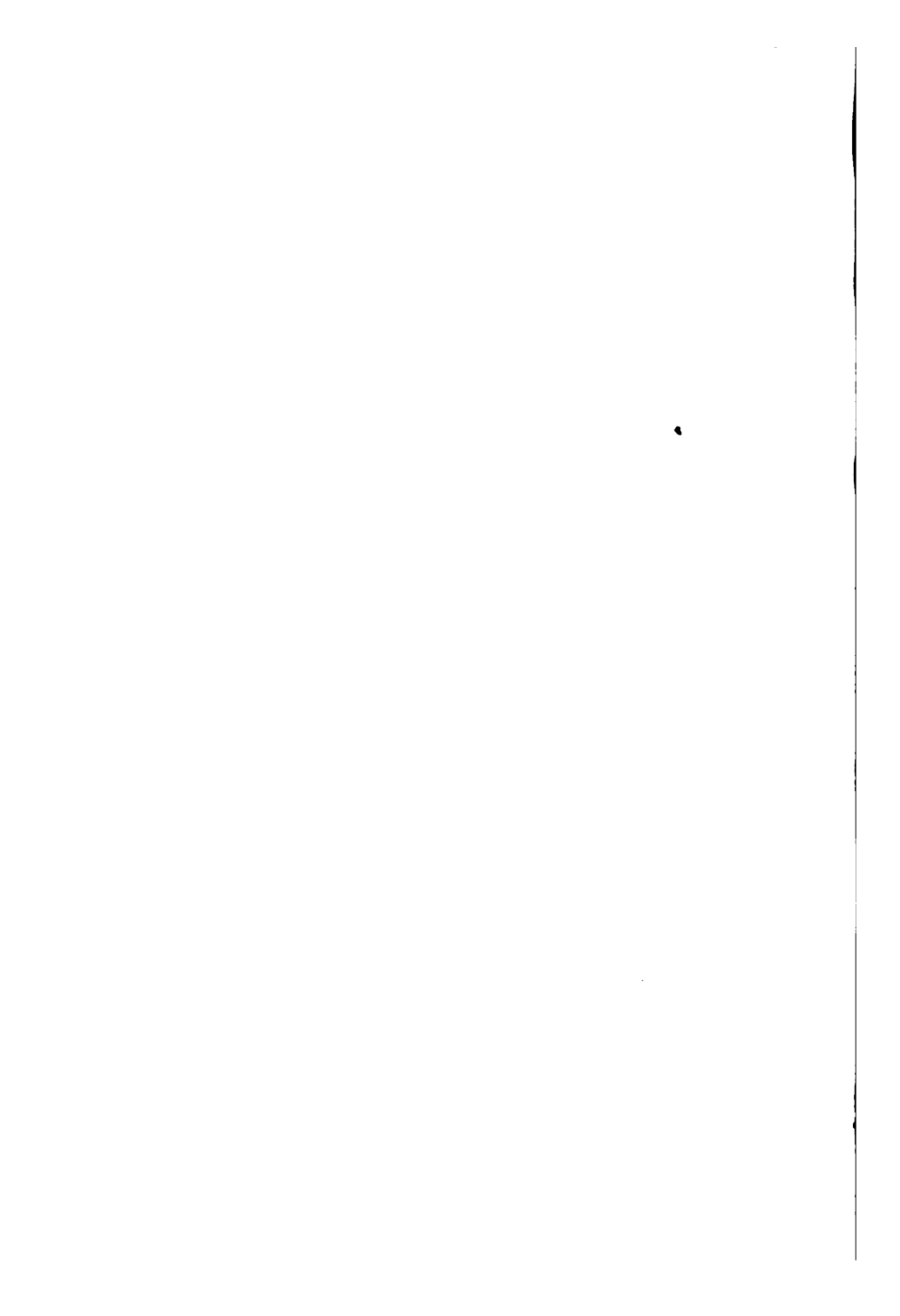


BY THE BLACK SEA


ALFRED RASCHONS,



shore, and we could see the white water on the bar beyond the light-house. We paddled on for several miles in the trough of the sea, dodging the waves and escaping capsizes only by careful steering. We thought it useless to venture out into the roadstead, but kept along near the shore, and when we found the waves were rising to a height which made further advance foolhardy, we ran the canoes ashore through the surf and hauled them up on the beach just under the sand-dunes—the ideal camp-ground of our imaginations. We were not in sight of any house, and as we could not paddle any farther, it looked as if we might enjoy our sea-shore camp after all. However, on reconnoitring from the top of one of the dunes, we saw an ox-cart slowly moving across the meadow a half-mile or more away, and ran and overtook it. The driver was a fine, tall young Roumanian farmer, with an intelligent, handsome face, and he consented to carry the canoes to the Sulina branch for us. He had an excellent cart and two yoke of oxen, and there was an easy road along the hard beach. On the firm white sand, under a brilliant noonday sun, and in full view of the great blue expanse of the Black Sea, we dismantled the canoes and lashed them on the ox-cart, one above the other. After a couple of hours' walk along the beach in the very wash of the waves, we came to the north bank of the Sulina arm opposite the town. Here we slid the canoes into the stream, took our last paddle across the Danube, and deposited them in the warehouse of a hospitable friend to await shipment to England. We then and there compared notes, and agreed we had only two things to regret in our whole trip: one that we did not launch the canoes at Villingen, fifteen miles above Donaueschingen, and the other that we did not have our camp on the sands of the Black Sea.



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